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Transportation as a Factor in the Development of Northern Illinois Previous to 1860

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS
AND LITERATURE
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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By
JUDSON FISKE LEE

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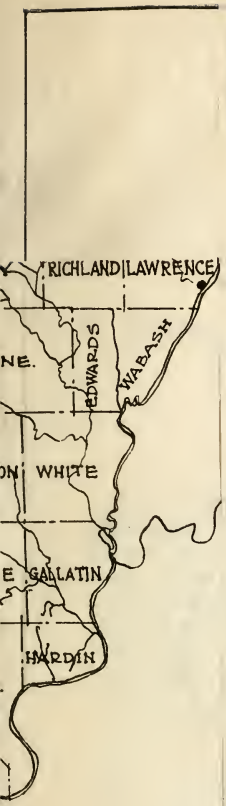
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Transportation—A Factor in the Development of Northern Illinois Previous to 1860

By Judson Fiske Lee
LEWIS INSTITUTE CHICAGO

INTRODUCTION

In the following pages an attempt is made to trace the development taking place before 1860 in that portion of Illinois lying north of the southern prairie line. This includes most of the State north of the mouth of the Illinois River. The development, too, of the transportation facilities which serve this area, and the relation of this development to that taking place in the district itself, form a part of this study. This portion of Illinois is composed of two distinct sections, the river land, and the prairie. These two divisions had, for the most part, distinct and separate histories. The prairie looked to the north for a commercial outlet; it was developed only as that route—offering lake and rail transportation—was made efficient in its carrying facilities. While the river land looked to the south for connections with the outside world, this river section was developed and settled as that route or as steam navigation upon the rivers (imports came in part via Cincinnati and the Ohio River; exports in part via Cincinnati and in part via St. Louis and New Orleans) improved in its carrying power. The chief stimulus to settlement and development in this section came from river transportation; in the prairie from transportation by lake and by railroad.

River transportation began earlier than the lake and rail transportation, and as a result the river counties were settled earlier than the prairies. In this treatment of the subject, however, this order is not followed; instead, the development of the lake route and the settlement depending on it are first traced. Lake transportation and the development of Chicago

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and her hinterland before 1850 are considered in Chapter I. The method of presentation is to set forth (1) the development of the hinterland; (2) the development of Chicago; and (3) to show that the development in both Chicago and the immediate back-country was dependent upon the lake transportation. Chapter II traces the building of plank roads within this area and shows their influence upon it. Chapters III and IV treat of the construction of the railroads centering in Chicago, and show their influence upon the growth of the prairie region previous to 1860. Chapters V and VI deal with the history of the river counties. Beginning with the earliest settlement under the American government, the history of this river section is brought down to the year 1860. During this period transportation facilities upon the river passed through the pirogue and keelboat and also the steamboat stage. By 1860, however, the railroads had been built, and as they were more serviceable than the steamboat, for the general purposes of the country, river navigation steadily declined. The railroads were stimulating growth even of the towns and counties lying nearest the river. The history of the river counties is the history of these agencies of transportation in relation to the development of the river counties.

CHAPTER I

Lake Transportation—The Stimulus to Development of Chicago and the Immediate Back Country Previous to 1860

The rapid rise of Chicago to her position as a world metropolis was one of the great facts of the last century. In 1830 Chicago was a mere trading post; today, in agricultural products the prices of the world are governed by her markets. Then, the number of inhabitants at this frontier port was less than two hundred; now, of American cities, New York alone surpasses her, and of the cities of the world she ranks fifth. The transformation was from a country market to one of the greatest centers of trade and industry in the world.

The rapidity of this growth was due to her location. Situated in the center of the world's greatest agricultural region and, at the same time, on the greatest internal waterway, Chicago inevitably became an important commercial and railway center. For, while the size and position of Lake Michigan, which lies directly across the lines of east-west traffic, compelled all railroads from the north and west to pass around the southern point of the lake, and hence through Chicago in order to reach the eastern markets, so also the thirteen hundred miles of water transportation connecting Chicago with the Atlantic coast made that city a natural center for railroads coming from the south and west. Exports shipped to eastern markets from the states lying southwest of Lake Michigan could be sent to Chicago by rail and then east by water more cheaply than by a direct and all-rail route. As a result of these conditions, twenty-five railway systems focus at Chicago, making the city the world's greatest railway center. Thus a richly productive hinterland, the Great Lakes, and the Erie Canal, and especially the position of

Lake Michigan compelled the growth of a metropolis at Chicago.

In 1830, however, only a small portion of the neighboring territory could have been tributary to Chicago. For no railroads, no canals, and not even respectable wagon roads led to the newly surveyed town of Chicago, and Peoria and Galena were the only other settlements in the entire northern section of the State (1). The condition and extent of this area, nevertheless, rapidly changed. "This country," said the Chicago American of 1835, "from Lake Michigan to the Illinois and Mississippi is not now an uninhabited, uncultivated region, but the emigrant has broken upon the stillness which reigned there, molested the forest grove, and turned up the rich soil to the sun. These fields which but yesterday were broad wastes, are now waving with corn and enriching the cultivator with plenteous harvests (2)." An immigrant, settling in this territory in this same year, believed that he had arrived just in time to secure a desirable site, and that before another autumn had passed not a suitable location would be left vacant (3). The whole northern part of the State exhibited a most extraordinary improvement in the years immediately preceding 1836 (4). The settlement of the country which began during these early years continued steadily throughout the period from 1830 to 1850 (5). A report of Kane County for 1841 said: "This county is marching onward with gigantic strides. * * * Improvements are continually being made, new farms are being commenced, her prairies begin to assume a less desolate appearance. * * * Good roads, bridges, fences, the schoolhouse, the courthouse, the church are seen in every direction" (6). A traveler passing through the country lying to the west of Chicago expressed amazement at the growth and advancement made during the early forties. "So great an increase of wealth and population, * * * such a deluge of men, women and children, horses, cattle and sheep, and every kind and description of personal property as has within that period literally poured over these vast plains", he declared, "outruns all parallel in the growth of a new country" (7). Belvidere, Rockford, Freeport and St. Charles grew to be towns of considerable importance, and the surrounding country was placed under cultivation. Chi-

cago's immediate hinterland was rapidly developed during the period just previous to 1850.

This settlement and development, however, took place chiefly along the rivers (8). The rest of the country remained for the most part, unpeopled and unimproved. This condition existed because the rivers furnished power for the mills and factories and were the main channels of commerce. Because, too, of transportation upon them they provided markets for the surplus products of the soil. Grain was exchanged at these river markets for clothing and articles of import. There, also, wheat was ground into flour and corn into meal. St. Charles on the Fox River, "buzzing and roaring and rattling" with all kinds of machinery, was likened, in 1845, to the city of Lowell, Massachusetts (9). Thus almost every pioneer activity was confined to the river districts, which became well settled and well developed, while the prairie remained uninhabited and unorganized.

Not only were the counties lying along the rivers more densely populated than the prairie regions, but within them the river townships were the most thickly settled. Ogle County, bordering the Rock River, increased its population from 3,479 (10) in 1840 to 10,020 (11) in 1850. It had twenty-four townships and the five (12) bordering the river, for which statistics can be given, had at this latter date almost one-fourth the total population of the county. In Winnebago with sixteen townships the seven along the river had more than half of the county's population (13). In Lee County, although Rock River runs across only Dixon and Palmyra townships, yet in 1850 more than one-fourth of the total population lived in these two townships (14). Along the Fox River, too, this same relative density of population was to be found. In Kane County, where there were sixteen townships and a total population, in 1850, of 16,703, more than half of that number, 8,652, lived in the five townships bordering Fox River. Kendall County, with nine townships, had a population of 7,730, more than half of whom lived in the four river townships. In McHenry County, too, the three river townships, Richmond, McHenry, and Algonquin, had a population respectively of 1,078, 1,176 and 1,455, and were the most densely settled townships within the county.

Growth in commercial activity naturally followed this rapid peopling of the district. The immigrants, at first merely consumers, soon settled and became producers (15). Thus exportation as well as importation increased and before 1850 important commercial relations sprang up within the area.

To what extent Chicago became the market for this territory is shown by the commercial growth of her port. During the first few years Chicago's trade was primarily an import trade, as would be expected in a new country. By 1836, though the exports were valued at but $1,000, imports were worth $325,203 (16). During the following years this relationship changed. Imports in 1842 were estimated at $664,347, while the exports were valued at $659,305. By 1847 imports and exports were worth respectively $2,641,852 and $2,296,299. The commerce of Chicago's port, both imports and exports, grew steadily during this period from 1830 to 1850. Previous to 1839 the increase in exports was slow because many of the newcomers, instead of applying their energies to the labors of production, were devoting themselves to speculation. The result was that although the surrounding country had changed remarkably in the course of five or six years, nevertheless it was not developed sufficiently to supply the home market. The price of food was necessarily high because of the great demand created by the wants of visitors, newcomers, and land speculators who were thronging into the State (17). The natural result was to restrict exportation and increase importation. Later conditions, however, tended to equalize the export and import trade. The panic of 1837 drove speculators from the market and forced men into labors of production. Consequently, more grain was raised and exportation during the latter part of the period greatly increased. The heavy immigration, the unwillingness of many to cultivate the soil, and the panic of 1837, were factors which determined in the main the commercial movements of the period.

Much of the importation to Chicago, which, as we have seen, increased in eleven years from $325,203 to $2,641,852, was to supply the city of Chicago. Some of it, however, was for people farther inland (18). Merchants from interior villages were as a matter of economy, beginning to use the Chicago or northern route for shipping goods from the East, and as a

consequence the warehouses of the Chicago forwarding merchants were glutted with merchandise destined to these internal points (19). At that time goods were sent from Chicago as a forwarding station westward to Freeport, Galena, and Prairie Du Chien; southward to Peoria, Tazewell, and Sangamon Counties; and to Crawfordsville and Terre Haute, Indiana (20). Thus, because of cheap transportation to and from the eastern markets Chicago became a forwarding center for a larger area of country (21).

Having taken note of the gradual peopling of northern Illinois, of the fact that the land bordering the rivers was first taken up, and of the extent of territory for which Chicago was a forwarding point, we may now consider the export trade in more detail in order to discover from how great a distance articles of export were hauled to this central market.

Grain, the direct product of the soil, was the chief article of export. Wheat, the most important cereal, was first shipped from Chicago in 1839 (22). The initial consignment was small, but it is significant that there was any surplus, since in 1837 flour readily brought $13 per barrel in Chicago (23), a fact which would indicate a scarcity of wheat at that time (24). But in these two years conditions had changed; flour and wheat were both in surplus, and exportation had begun. So much wheat came into Chicago that in 1841 there were not vessels enough to carry it away. Trains of from thirteen to twenty wagons, loaded with wheat, were a customary sight in Chicago, and at times, lines of eighty wagons might be seen en route for the city (25). This was due to the fact that merchants in the small towns were buying great quantities of grain and hauling it in wagons into this central market. One firm alone, in Ottawa, advertised in 1842 for fifty teams to haul wheat to Chicago. As a result of the activity of these inland towns, shipment from this port to eastern markets increased rapidly. In 1842, 586,907 bushels of wheat were sent from Chicago port (26). The increase in size of shipments continued until 1848, when the cultivation of other grains was given greater attention, and wheat lost its relative importance in the Chicago market (27). At the close of the period, about 1860, corn began to come into Chicago in greater quantities than ever before. The raising of wool, too, was

found to be exceedingly profitable, the first being marketed in 1842 (28). Beef (29) and pork (30) were also brought in large quantities to this central market and forwarded for eastern consumption. Though the relative importance of these various articles of export varied, nevertheless there was a steady aggregate increase.

These articles of exportation were hauled to Chicago from distances of 150, 200 and 250 miles (31). Chicago, in 1841, was the market for "about one-half the State of Illinois, a large portion of Indiana, and a very considerable part of Wisconsin" (32). Farmers hauled grain through the interior towns to Chicago, where higher prices could be secured and goods purchased at fifty or one hundred per cent. less than at the nearer markets. In September, 1842, when Chicago was paying 53 to 54 cents cash for wheat, Springfield offered but 37½ cents in trade (33). In 1841, on the same day that Chicago was paying $1.00, Peoria bought wheat at 40 cents (34). In various places during the season of 1841, throughout southern, middle and northern Illinois, but 50 cents was paid for wheat, while Chicago was giving on the average of 87 cents. This ability to pay such high prices gave Chicago a supremacy over these competing towns and made her the grain center of northern Illinois.

The commercial growth of Chicago made necessary an increase in the number and size of business houses at that place. In 1831 Chicago had only one store (35), but in 1832 there were three (36), and by 1835 the number of dry goods, grocery, hardware and drug stores, was more than fifty (37). Moreover, the spacious streets were crowded with carts and wagons; there was a bustling trade, where but a short time before was the unbroken prairie (38). In 1837 one hundred and twenty stores, twenty of which were wholesale, were required to transact the business of this crowded mart (39). The one-store market had become a city of many wholesale and retail stores.

The growth of Chicago and the building up of her tributary area were, as we have seen, very closely related. The development of the one was impossible without the development of the other, for a thickly settled and highly cultivated back country was an absolutely essential factor in the building of

a great Chicago. And, conversely, it was true that such a condition in the nearby farming section was possible only when Chicago offered to that area its money, wealth, and commercial advantages. Because of these facts the interdependence of Chicago and her hinterland has been very marked. However, in spite of this interdependence and although the development of either Chicago or northern Illinois was impossible without the development of the other, yet the building up of neither could have taken place without a third factor—efficient transportation facilities connecting them with the eastern markets. Such an element was supplied by the rise of lake transportation. This agency made the commercial growth of Chicago possible. It allowed her to sell cheaply and buy at rates sufficiently high to give profits to the farmer. It made Chicago the point of contact between the East and the West, and furnished the chief stimulus which changed northern Illinois from a totally dependent importing country to one having a considerable export trade. Lake transportation facilities, in turn, were dependent upon these other elements. For as Chicago and her surrounding country were developed and as their commercial demands increased, the transportation facilities serving them became more efficient.

In 1830 no vessels had come to Chicago, and by 1833 only two had visited her port (40). During the season of 1836, 456 entries were made (41), and by 1839 a regular line of eight boats ran from Buffalo to Chicago, taking sixteen days for each trip. The following year the number of boats increased to forty-eight, and in 1841 seventy trips were made between Buffalo and Chicago (42). The number of entries and departures for the season of 1841 averaged 150 per month; and during the year 1842 there were 705 arrivals with a tonnage of 117,711 (43). This was almost twice the tonnage of 1836. Thus, the increase in steam tonnage at the port of Chicago was very great.

Since the carrying power of other than steam vessels was at that time not inconsiderable, however, a full knowledge of the water transportation agencies required a study of the tonnage of the sailing vessels. In 1831, before even a single steam vessel reached Chicago, the port was frequented by

four small sailing vessels—two brigs and two schooners (44), and after that date these sailing vessels continued to do a heavy business. The following statement, taken from the Buffalo Advertiser of 1846, gives an idea of the amount of freight carried by the sailing vessel: "The sail craft upon the lakes are doing better this season than they have for several years past. Every vessel returns full freighted, and so increasing is the demand for conveyance by this means that our forwarders have established a regular line to the Upper Lakes. Six of our largest brigs have been selected for this purpose and will depart weekly from this city and Chicago, touching, of course, at all the important points on Lake Michigan. The merchants and forwarders of Michigan City, St. Joe, Milwaukee, etc., who fancy they have been neglected by steamboat lines during their trips to Chicago, will now be enabled to ship regularly and by the best class of vessels" (45). The sailing craft did a heavy carrying trade even though the steamer tonnage had made such a remarkable growth.

The increase in both steam and sailing tonnage though great, did not, however, equal the growth in the actual carrying power of that tonnage. Newly acquired speed upon the water enabled the same tonnage to make more trips and thus carry more freight. The increased capacity of vessels, the substitution of steam for hand labor at the docks, and the erection of numerous newly improved warehouses, all added to the carrying power of a given tonnage. The amount of traffic actually carried by ships of the same tonnage in 1851 as compared with that carried in 1841, was ten fold more. Great as had been the growth in steam and sailing tonnage, the increase in carrying power was even greater.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

(1) Chicago Historical Society Manuscripts, Vol. 31. Letter of Charles Butler telling of a journey from Michigan City to Chicago: "On my left lay the prairies bounded only by the distant horizon like an expanse of ocean; * * *. There was an entire absence of animal life, nothing visible in the way of human habitation or to indicate the presence of man."

(2) The Chicago American, June 27, 1835.

(3) Chicago Hist. Soc. MSS., Vol. 17, Letter of George I. Goodhue to Hazard B. Terrill, descriptive of Northern Illinois in 1835: "Emigration is going on with wonderful rapidity through the whole state and before next autumn not a desirable location will be left vacant. I arrived in the exact time and selected a place that many desired. I have traveled nearly the whole time. I have been here and seen most of this State, Indiana, and Michigan Territory; also part of Missouri. I find the north part of this State the most desirable * * *."

(4) Chicago American, July 16, 1836.
(5) De Bow's Commercial Review of the South and West, V., p. 372.
(6) Chicago Weekly American, Sept. 3, 1841.
(7) Prairie Farmer, V, p. 152.
(8) Stewart, Catherine, New Homes in the West (Nashville 1843), p. 132: "The country around the Fox and Rock Rivers and westward into Galena, which five years ago disclosed little more than an unbroken waste, is now almost entirely filled up with smiling settlements: the land yielding seventy, in some instances a hundred, bushels of corn an acre; equally productive of other grains and every kind of vegetation suited to a northern climate." Chicago American, July 16, 1836: "The whole line of that portion of Fox River included within her borders is strung with neat and animated villages."
(9) Prairie Farmer, V., p. 152.
(10) Sixth Federal Census.
(11) Seventh Federal Census.
(12) Ibid. Byron, 644; Nashua, 703; Marion, 595; Oregon, 540; Grand De Tour, 378.
(13) Seventh Census, 6,924 out of a total of 11,773.
(14) Seventh Census, 1,661 out of a total of 5,292.
(15) Chicago Daily Journal, March 27, 1845: "From consumers we became producers, and are in fact but emerging into importance. Chicago, naturally from her position, keeps pace with the improvements in the extent of country, of which she is legitimately the market."
(16) Andrew's Report on Colonial and Lake Trade (1852), p. 175.

Imports and Exports from Chicago

Year	Imports	Exports
1836	$ 325,203	$ 1,000
1837	373,677	10,000
1838	379,174	16,044
1839	630,980	38,843
1840	562,106	228,635
1841	564,347	348,862
1842	664,347	659,305
1843	971,849	682,210
1844	1,686,416	785,504
1845	2,043,445	1,543,510
1846	2,027,150	1,813,468
1847	2,641,852	2,296,299

(17) Chicago American, June 20, 1835: "Our market is almost bare of all kinds of provisions. The prodigious influx of emigrants and visitants for the last month has produced a great scarcity of the leading articles of subsistence. Most kinds of provisions are now selling at enormous prices: Flour has been sold the present week at twenty dollars per barrel; butter at thirty-one cents; and many other articles proportionately high."
(18) An advertisement given in the Chicago American of December 31, 1836, for unclaimed packages at Hubbard and Company's Express, showed the following destinations: Elkhart, Goshen, Michigan City, and Terre Haute, Indiana; Independence and Clinton, Iowa, and Joliet, Galena and Danville, Illinois.
(19) Chicago American, Sept. 26, 1835.
(20) Chicago Weekly American, Oct. 29, 1841; Sept. 9, 1844.
(21) It is not to be assumed, however, from these facts that Chicago was the chief forwarding point for all this territory. Only this conclusion can be drawn that Chicago and the northern route, was a competing channel of commerce through which at different times package freight was sent to these distant places.
(22) Hunt's Merchants Magazine and Commercial Register, XXVI, p. 926.
(23) Chicago Weekly American, Sept. 10, 1841.
(24) This unusually high rate was due in part to the inflated prices which ruled the markets just previous to the panic of 1837.
(25) Chicago Weekly American, Aug. 24, 1842.
(26) Ibid.
(27) Hunt, XXVIII, p. 560. The decrease in receipts of wheat is not to be explained by a change of route unfavorable to Chicago, but by a change of crop in the tributary country.
(28) Chicago Weekly American, June 29, 1842. The prairies were suited to growing wool, and, although per acre as much could not have been produced had the market been close at hand, yet because wool could be shipped at one-fourth the price wheat could, the net gain on wool was greater than that on wheat.
(29) Chicago Daily Tribune, Dec. 28, 1850.
(30) Chicago Weekly American, Jan. 5, 1842.
(31) Chicago American, Sept. 17, 1841.
(32) Ibid.
(33) Chicago Weekly American, Sept. 27, 1842.
(34) Chicago Weekly American, Sept. 17, 1841.
(35) Andreas, A. T. History of Cook County, Illinois (Chicago 1884), p. 115-116.
(36) Chicago American, Aug. 15, 1835.

(37) Andreas, Cook County, p. 142; Chicago American, Aug. 15, 1835. There were in 1835 four large forwarding houses, two book stores, one brewery, one steam mill, and twenty-five shops of all descriptions.
(38) Chicago American, February 4, 1837.
(39) Hunt, XXVI, p. 425. Illinois in 1837, p. 135.
(40) Hunt, VI, p. 189. Illinois in 1837, p. 135. A letter from a "Rambler," states that there were four arrivals in 1832.
(41) Hunt, XXVI, p. 425.
(42) Hunt, VI, p. 189.
(43) Senate Documents, 1842-43, IV., No. 234.
(44) Gerhard, F. Illinois as it is (Chicago 1857), p. 388.
(45) Chicago Weekly American, July 31, 1846.

CHAPTER II

Plank Roads, or the Pre-Railroad Lines of Transportation

During the first fifteen years of settlement of northern Illinois and while the remarkable growth outlined in the preceeding chapter was taking place, very little was done to connect Chicago with her adjacent hinterland (1). No good roads were built, and what commerce centered at Chicago, did so because of her naturally advantageous position. At the close of this period, however, an enterprising spirit demanded that roads be built, which should offer to the interior region advantages similar to those which lake transportation was giving to Chicago (2). True, internal improvements had earlier been undertaken by the State, but from these efforts little other than evil results came. The short railroad which was completed had small value, no canals were built, and the rivers were not yet improved. Now, however, conditions had changed. These distant settlements had grown and were demanding good roads which would connect them with a primary market. In response to this demand these later improvements were made. They were but natural steps in the building up of the country, results of an earlier development and aids to a later one.

These improvements consisted in the laying of a system of plank roads, the construction of railroads and the building of the Illinois and Michigan canal. The plank roads, more primitive than any of the other improvements undertaken, did not radically change the course of economic development, but simply intensified that which had already taken place (3). Their results, though important, were not so far reaching as those of the other improvements. The canal and the railroads were much more powerful agents (4). They reached farther into the country and changed the character

both of Chicago and of the rural districts. They greatly increased Chicago's wholesale business and transformed the unbroken prairie into wheat fields upon which were built many grain store houses and shipping stations. Plank roads on the other hand merely supplanted the old "black ditch" and made it possible for trains of wagons to come from a much greater distance into the city. Their influence was to give the market a steadiness otherwise impossible, and to increase the retail trade.

The history of plank roads in Illinois is the history of a State-wide movement. They were built out from almost every important town. Those of primary concern led out from Chicago. In 1849 a general Plank Road Corporation act was passed whereby corporations might be formed for the purpose of constructing and managing plank roads (5). Under this law, and even previous to it under special charters, corporations were formed, each of which built a road from Chicago into the country. The North-western, Western and South-western were the principal plank roads built.

Attention has already been called to the fact that the earliest settlements were along the rivers, and that to the west of Chicago they were on the Mississippi at Galena, and upon the Fox and Rock Rivers. These distant settlements were at first disconnected, for the prairie between the lines of settlement was then unbroken. The first trail across the prairie to Galena was made in 1825, and not until nine years later was the first stage line in this section of the country established (6). It ran from Chicago to Dixon, and thence into Galena from a southerly direction. Trade followed this stage line and because of this fact the towns through which it passed became more prosperous. On the other hand, the settlements that were lying to the north of this road and directly west of Chicago, and which had no good outlet, were placed at a disadvantage. The result, with trade following a route favorable to some towns and unfavorable to others, was that jealousy sprang up and a demand for new roads was created which later materialized in the building of competing trade routes.

These first roads, however, were but openings through the timber land and marked out routes across the prairie. Nev-

ertheless, they met the requirements of the time. But as the distant settlements increased in their productive power the importance of well-built roads was more fully realized (7). The result was that in 1844 the Illinois State legislature was petitioned for the power to construct a plank road. Although the bill introduced in response to this petition became a partisan measure and was defeated, yet the spirit demanding it was uncompromising (8). The Chicago papers were urging the building of plank roads (9). At Bryan, Ogle County, meetings were held to discuss plans for building better roads to the principal market. The preamble to resolutions adopted at a meeting in Elgin sets forth as follows the urgent need of plank roads: "Whereas, the large and increasing amount of agricultural products yielded by the fertile soil of Illinois, even in the present beginning of its cultivation, which requires transportation from the Fox and the Rock River Valley to the city of Chicago, with the vast and equally increasing amount of merchandise, lumber, iron, salt, etc., rendered necessary from the city to the country, call urgently for some better thoroughfare than is now possessed" (10). The needs both of the country and of Chicago, it was felt, demanded this improvement.

Finally, as a result of the growing need and of this unceasing clamor, the necessary legislation was secured, corporations were formed, and plank roads were built from the city to these distant settlements. The first of the kind extending from Chicago was the South-western Road (11). It was commenced in May, 1848, and by 1850 sixteen miles of the road had been completed (12). It then reached to Brush Hill, or to the eastern boundary of DuPage County (13). As extensions to this road the Naperville and Oswego, the St. Charles and Warrenville (14), the Sycamore, and the Oswego and Little Rock roads were built, thus making a continuous line of plank roads leading out from Chicago for a distance of sixty miles (15). These roads formed the main line, which, together with the branch roads connecting it with the small towns, made a network of improved roads throughout the section of country lying southwest of Chicago.

Similar routes were extended from Chicago to the west and to the north-west. In 1849 the North-western Plank Road was

begun and built to Oak Ridge, a distance of eight miles, and during the following year was extended to Dutchman's Point (16). From this main line branch feeders were thrown out to the Des Plaines River (17). The purpose was to connect with Chicago the distant but important trading point of Wheeling, situated on the upper Des Plaines River, and by this main route, with its branch roads, to secure to the city of Chicago the surplus products of the whole Des Plaines valley. The Western Plank Road was built from this line at Oak Ridge eight miles from the city. From thence it ran to the east line of DuPage County, where it connected with the Elgin and Genoa Plank Road, which passed through Elgin and terminated at Genoa (18), a distance of over fifty miles (19) from Chicago.

Besides these main plank roads two other short ones led from the city, the Lake and McHenry County, and the Southern plank roads. The former connected Waukegan with Hainesville, McHenry County (20). In 1850 plans were made to extend this road from Waukegan to Chicago and from Hainesville to Woodstock. Whether or not these plans were executed is uncertain. The Southern Plank Road was built from Chicago as far as Kyles' Tavern, ten miles from the city. The purpose was to extend the road through Momence, in Will County, to Middleport in Iroquois County, a distance of seventy-five miles. But this extension was never made (21). Running north from Clark Street, nearly parallel to the lake shore, still another road was planked (22). This route passed by the tavern of Rees and Hundley to Little Rock River; thence through Pine Grove to Hood's Tavern on the Green Bay Road. Thus, plank roads were built from Chicago as a center to the north, north-west, west, south-west and south. Each led to a rich agricultural region and served as a connecting road between it and the great primary market of the West. Over these roads the surplus of this productive country poured into Chicago.

These plank roads proved to be good business propositions to the corporations owning them. The Southern Road, but ten miles in length, declared a dividend in 1851 of fourteen per cent. (23). The North-western Plank Road Company, without declaring dividends for a time, used the earnings

to extend the road. During this period the amounts received were equal to about one-fifth of the first expenditure (24). In 1851 a net income was received from this road of thirty or forty per cent. on the original cost (25). The statistics for the year 1852 are not given, yet a comparison of tolls for the month of February with the same month of 1851 indicates for 1852 a much larger income (26). The South-western Road likewise proved very remunerative (27). Upon the first two miles of this road more than eighty per cent. of the original cost was received in tolls (28). Each of the roads proved a wise and winning investment to the stockholders.

Not only were these roads beneficial to those who promoted them, but they aided in the development both of Chicago and the surrounding country. They were far superior to the railroads in building up a retail trade (29). "From no other improvement", said a writer of the period, "has Chicago derived more direct and manifest benefit in proportion to the capital invested than from the plank roads which connect it with the adjacent county" (30). They changed a fluctuating market into a steady and reliable one, thereby removing the conditions so harassing to a successful merchandise business, and so destructive to a well regulated system of interchange (31). Curtiss, in his Western Portraiture, pronounced them improvements "that greatly facilitate the business between Chicago and the country" (32).

So clearly connected are Chicago and the tributary country that the benefits of the one were advantages of the other. The results already pointed out are those which directly affected the city. The country, however, through which these roads passed was likewise greatly benefited. Transportation was so accelerated that one could travel ten or twelve miles on the plank road with greater ease and in less time than six miles upon a common road (33). The farmer could haul larger loads and make better time than formerly, and with much less destruction to property and animals (34). "Stiffness, decay and death", said the Chicago Daily Democrat, "are the necessary results of overtaxing the animal's energy where it is long continued. In this respect alone, plank roads would confer a lasting benefit to the country; they would save an immense loss in the wear and tear of wagons and in the

deterioration of stock" (35). The farmer, because of them, became more independent. Instead of being compelled, as formerly, to deliver his last year's crops during the best weather for farming, he could take advantage of sunny skies in caring for his new crop. Still other advantages than these accrued directly to the farmer because of plank roads. His lands became saleable at new and higher prices (36). Wood, being easily conveyed, could be sold with profit, and because of this fact timber lands rose in value (37). Better improvements were made upon the farms lying along the line of the plank roads (38). More farms were opened and new houses and barns were built. The plank roads brought prosperity to the country through which they passed.

These roads have been viewed as agents in the development of the city and of the adjacent country. Their full and complete history is not required, nor will it be pursued further than to show their usefulness as a primary developing agent. The period considered is from 1848, the date of their first inception, until the railroad relegated them to a secondary factor. In their first function, the plank roads were the main through routes from the back country to Chicago. Later, railroads usurped this through traffic, and plank road stock went below par (39). From this time the function of plank roads was not to furnish through transportation routes, but to serve as branch lines to the railroads and the canal. This phase, though important, becomes secondary, and will be traced only in a general way. The railroads and the canal assumed primary importance as transportation agencies, and their history becomes the logical continuation of this aspect of the subject.

The use of the plank road in this secondary phase may best be illustrated by the consideration of those running into Freeport. This town with railroad connections to Chicago once established, began the building of plank roads out into the surrounding country. One road was built by the way of Cedarville and Oneco to Monroe, in Green County, Wisconsin (40). Other routes were to Rock Run and to North Grove, and still another to the mills on Yellow Creek. These roads connected the territory within a radius of thirty miles of Freeport with a cash market. This territory, too, like that

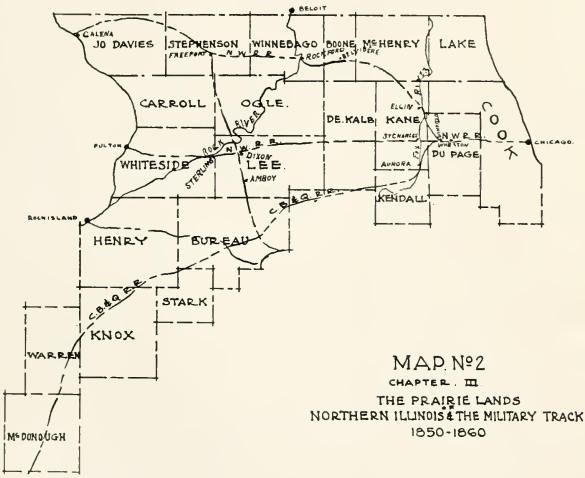
immediately adjacent to Chicago, was enhanced in value (41). Other roads were in contemplation, the progress and full history of which will not be followed here, but whose purpose was the connection of tributary country with through transportation lines, and not directly with the central market itself. These were the Oswego and Indiana lines (42), the Fulton County Road connecting Canton with the river (43), and the road connecting Virginia with Beardstown on the Illinois River. Pittsfield, too, was connected with Florence, as was Lockport with Plainville (44). These were some of the many minor plank roads built out from various local centers. The produce of the country was hauled over them to the smaller towns, only to be sent ultimately to Chicago.

During this early period, Chicago passed from a stage in which the immediate country was largely undeveloped, and where there were no good roads leading to the distant river settlements, to a stage in which the country tributary to her had so developed that into her store-houses poured millions of bushels of grain. Chicago herself was building up a large commerce, and to this transformation from a small town to a large commercial center the plank road system, "one of the greatest improvements introduced into the state", contributed its part. The plank road made Chicago's retail trade, and was an important factor in developing northern Illinois. It was an efficient agent in conquering the prairie land.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

(1) Chicago Daily Journal, Sept, 9, 1844.
(2) Ibid.
(3) "The roads are constructed with either a single or a double track. The single track is eight feet wide with plank, and as much more without it, upon which wagons may turn out. The whole (sixteen feet) is graded at the rate of about six hundred feet to the mile, or one foot in twelve. The road being first covered with clay spread evenly over it. sills are laid down at the sides, and the ends of the planks are made to rest upon these, and at the same time also upon the clay of the intervening road. The ends of the planks are not pinned or fastened in any way whatever, care only being taken that they shall not lie in a straight line upon the sills, but irregularly, so as to give a better hold to wagons coming from the clay on the plank roads. There is also a good ditch at each side of the road so as to drain it well." Baltimore American reprinted in Niles Register, LXXV, p. 221.
(4) The railroad is discussed in the succeeding chapters. The Illinois and Michigan Canal, however, is not treated because Professor J. W. Putnam, of Butler College, Indiana, has been for some time making a special study of this subject. See Journal of Political Economy, May, June and July, 1909; also "The Illinois and Michigan Canal, A Study in Economic History," by the same author.
(5) Illinois Session Laws, 1849, 1st Sess. Sixteenth General Assembly, p. 128.
(6) History of DuPage County (1882), p. 150. In this year Mr. Kellogg pioneered his way from Peoria to Galena, hitherto unreached save by the river.
(7) Chicago Daily Journal, Sept. 9, 1844.
(8) Daily Journal, Dec. 12, 1844.
(9) Chicago Democrat, Sept. 11, 1844; Chicago Daily Journal, Sept. 9, 1844.
(10) Daily Journal, Sept. 14, 1844.
(11) Chicago Daily Tribune, Dec. 28, 1850; Chicago Daily Democrat, May 31, 1850.

(12) Chicago Daily Tribune, Dec. 28, 1850.
(13) Chicago Daily Democrat, May 31, 1850; Chicago Daily Tribune, Dec. 28, 1850; Hunt's Merchants Magazine, Vol. XXVI, p. 442.
(14) Chicago Daily Democrat, May 31, 1850.
(15) Chicago Daily Democrat, Jan. 10, 1851; Chicago Daily Democrat, May 31, 1850.
(16) Chicago Democrat, Dec. 18, 1850; Chicago Daily Democrat, May 31, 1850.
(17) Hunt, Vol. XXVI, p. 442.
(18) Chicago Daily Democrat, May 31, 1850.
(19) Chicago Daily Tribune, Dec. 28, 1850.
(20) Chicago Daily Democrat, Dec. 20, 1850.
(21) The reason this project was not carried out is uncertain. A factional fight over the route (Chicago Daily Democrat, Nov. 17, 1849) has been assigned as a reason. One authority (Chicago Daily Tribune, Dec. 28, 1850) notes that the people living along the line requested that the roads should not be built. Competition of the I. & M. Canal may have been feared by its directors as was that of the I. C. R. R. Hunt, XXVI, p. 443.
(22) Moses & Kirkland, p. 304. Hunt, XXVI, p. 442, Chicago Daily Dem. Jan. 21, 1851.
(23) Chicago Daily Democrat, Jan. 9, 1852; Hunt XXVI, p. 443.
(24) Chicago Daily Tribune, Dec. 28, 1850.
(25) Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, XXVI, p. 442.
(26) Chicago Weekly Democrat, March 14, 1852. The tolls for February, 1851, were but $757.12; while for the same month 1852, this amount was more than doubled, being $1,516.54.
(27) Chicago Daily Democrat, Dec. 9, 1848.
(28) Chicago Daily Democrat, Oct. 2, 1848.
(29) Chicago Daily Democrat, Dec. 9, 1848; May 31, 1850; June 8, 1849.
(30) Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, XXVI, p. 442.
(31) Chicago Daily Democrat, Jan. 16, 1849; Feb. 1, 1849; March 31, 1850.
(32) Curtiss' Western Portraiture, p. 53.
(33) Chicago Daily Democrat, Sept. 4, 1849.
(34) Chicago Daily Democrat, June 27, 1851.
(35) Chicago Daily Democrat, July 31, 1850.
(36) Chciago Daily Democrat, June 27, 1851. From ten to fifty per cent.
(37) Chciago Daily Democrat, May 13, 1850; Oct. 9, 1848; June 28, 1851.
(38) Chicago Daily Democrat, July 17, 1851; June 13, 1851; Chicago Daily Democrat, Nov. 17, 1849.
(39) History DuPage Co. (1857), p. 31. The South-western Road was torn up in 1857.
(40) Chicago Daily Democrat, Sept. 9, 1851; Chicago Weekly Democrat, Sept. 13, 1851.
(41) Chicago Daily Democrat, Sept. 9, 1851; Sept, 2, 1851.
(42) Chicago Daily Democrat, June 27, 1851.
(43) Chicago Daily Democrat, Jan. 10, 1851.
(44) Chicago Daily Democrat, Oct. 25, 1851; Chicago Daily Democrat, Nov. 7, 1851.



MAP. Nº2

CHAPTER. III

THE PRAIRIE LANDS
NORTHERN ILLINOIS & THE MILITARY TRACK
1850-1860

CHAPTER III

Railroads in the Prairie Lands of Northern Illinois and in the Military Tract, 1850-1860

The building of railroads out from Chicago brought about a new era in the development of that city, and of the tributary country. Previous to 1850 settlements were made chiefly along the rivers, which were then the lines of through traffic. Yet before 1860 the railroads had been built, and as a result the prairie had been settled, new farms had been enclosed, and the hitherto unclaimed land had become the home of an industrious laboring people.

Agitation for the building of railroads began early, but nothing advantageous was accomplished until the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad was built. The purpose of this road was to make Galena and Chicago the terminals, thereby connecting the upper Mississippi and the lake traffic (1). Chicago desired to handle Galena's lead, and to supply the laborers in the lead mines of that place with the necessaries of life. Moreover, the carrying trade of the Rock and Fox River settlements would also be secured by the building of such a road. This road was started in 1846, and by September 1, 1850, the main line to Freeport was carrying freight (2). Previous to this date the St. Charles (3), the Aurora (4), and the Beloit (5) branches had been completed, and on December 16, 1855, the line from Dixon to Fulton City was opened. Thus, by the close of the year 1855, the main line to Freeport of 122½ miles, the Beloit branch, 21 miles, and the Chicago-Fulton road, 105½ miles, were all completed, making a total of 249 miles (6). This system of roads connected the Mississippi and the Lakes, gave two separate lines of communication across the prairie, joined the settlements lying along three separate river systems, and touched twelve different counties in northern Illinois.

At this time, too, other roads were built through this prairie lying north and west of the Illinois River (7). The main line of the Illinois Central was constructed through the division of territory now under consideration. This road crossed both branches of the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, touching the Fulton line at Dixon, and the terminal of the other branch at Freeport; and joined the latter named place with Galena and Dunlieth on the Mississippi. The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy system of the present time formed by the consolidation of the Central Military Tract Railroad, the Aurora branch, and the Peoria and Oquawka was constructed during this era of railroad building. This system ran through the center of the Military Tract (8). It passed between the sources of streams which run to the great river systems on either side, opened up a prairie hitherto undeveloped, and reached the Mississippi at Quincy, a distance of 210 miles from Chicago (9). The branch of the road, formerly the Peoria and Oquawka, left the main line at Galesburg, 173 miles from Chicago, and running westward 100 miles, touched the Mississippi at Burlington. The Rock Island, which, running from Chicago, paralleled the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Illinois River as far as Peru, turned westward at this point, ran across the northern part of the Military Tract, crossed the Illinois Central at La Salle, and the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy at Mendota, and reached the Mississippi at Rock Island. The entire length of this road, 181 miles, was opened for use in 1854 (10).

Thus throughout this prairie land lying to the north of the Illinois River four systems of railroads were constructed. These improvements, carried to a completion between 1850 and 1856, crossed almost every prairie county (11), and by means of them prices nearly equal to those given at the Chicago market were offered at stations easily within reach of all. The old difficulty of marketing surplus produce could no longer seriously retard the development of this rich prairie land.

As the through transportation lines were completed their terminals and depots became the storehouses of the surrounding country. For farmers, instead of hauling their grain to Chicago, as they formerly had done, were now delivering

it at these depots (12). When the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad was completed to the Des Plaines River, over thirty loads of wheat were there deposited awaiting transportation (13). St. Charles, with only the advantages offered by a branch road, built up a good business and became the grain center for a large area. The Kane County Democrat said of the town: "Life and animation courses every avenue. She has built a branch railroad, procured cars and a good engine by the voluntary subscription of her own citizens during the last year, and is now reaping the fruits of her labors by a rich trade from the surrounding country" (14). During the first year (1850) this branch road, but five miles in length and doing the transportation work of St. Charles alone, did almost three thousand dollars ($2,994.94) worth of business, which was increased the following year to $4,468.36 (15). In the year ending April 30, 1856, this amount was still further increased to $12,559.64. Thus the advantages offered to this town by the railroad stimulated its business and general development.

Upon the completion of the railroad through Marengo, that town also advanced rapidly in wealth and prosperity, and became an important trading point. Her export business was greatly increased. Four warehouses, each with a capacity of 60,000 bushels, were built; grain could not be shipped as fast as it was bought by local dealers (16). Morrison, in Whiteside County, experienced a similar growth. This town was laid out in 1855, and although the first station was but a board shanty, yet the historian of Whiteside County reports that during the same year a large business was done in shipping to and from that point. As a result, the rich farming lands on all sides were soon improved by an enterprising class of farmers, and trade increased still more rapidly (17). A writer in the Sentinel of June 1, 1860, said: "Four years ago Morrison came into existence. At that time there was but one house within a mile, and each settler was obliged to haul his building material from the Mississippi, or Sterling, or Dixon" (18). Yet in 1859 there were shipped from this station 131,414 bushels of wheat, 49,996 bushels of corn, and various other commodities. Though the town was small, it received much lumber, coal and general merchandise, and a new impulse was given to every activity.

When it was known beyond question that the railroad would be built through Carroll County, "there was a rapid influx of aspiring business men" (19). Lanark sprang into existence and then into importance. "Where but a few months before there was nothing but an undisturbed prairie, with no really productive and remunerative farms in sight, all became hurry and bustle. Stores and trading places were opened just as fast as accommodations could be secured" (20). The town of Fulton, in Whiteside County, experienced a similar growth. When ground was first broken for the railroad at that place, there were probably not over four hundred inhabitants within the limits of the corporation; but within a few years thereafter there were at least six times this number (21). Kendall County, too, became prosperous, owing "mostly to the general incoming of railroads, by which prices of both produce and real estate were quickened" (22). In Lee County the building of the Illinois Central caused "not only the rapid growth of Dixon, but the founding of the Amboy Car Works, which gave rise to the growth of that young city" (23). Elgin had a population of 540 in 1850, but in six years it had increased its population to as many times that number (24). Amboy's growth was not less remarkable. Its population had grown from 16 to more than 1,300. The railroad stimulated trade and had an influence upon the development of the prairie lying north of the Illinois River.

By 1856 and 1857, less than five years after the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad was completed, every station upon it was doing an important freight business. Danby, Winfield and Wheaton, mere villages, built up respectively an annual freight traffic of 4,135,850; 4,526,730; and 7,294,430 pounds (25). The freight of the more important places, Clinton, Elgin, Belvidere, and Rockford, was respectively 11,986,900; 35,860,810; 44,574,980; and 85,405,880 pounds per annum. At any one of these larger depots the cash value of the freight was annually more than $20,000, while in some places it was twice and three times this amount. Even the smallest trading stations, with two or three exceptions, were annually shipping freight valued at more than $3,000. What such a growth means cannot be adequately represented by giving this data. For it must be remembered that this commerce was built up

in a new country. Hence, a freight depot, doing an annual business of three, five or ten thousand dollars, would indicate that many new settlers had come in, many farms had been enclosed, and that land hitherto unbroken was being cultivated and made to contribute to the needs of man.

The total freight earnings of this road, (the Galena and Chicago Union), which between 1852 and 1857 increased from less than $125,000 to almost $1,500,000, affords still further evidence that a great transformation had been made in the tributary country (26). Then, too, the eastward tonnage, which was a surplus product, steadily increased (27). This growth in exports can mean only that the country had become more thickly settled, and that the farms were being better cultivated.

The import shipments also give indication of this transformation. Between 1850 and 1853 the increase in imports was from 28,244 to 96,627 tons, which would indicate a rapid settling of the country. But during the late fifties a more thickly settled and better cultivated area brought about a decrease in the imports, since the needs of the people could then be supplied within the district itself (28). Thus an increase of imports in the early fifties and a subsequent decrease of imports during the late fifties, alike indicate a constant development.

The transformation which we have witnessed in the area through which the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad had been constructed from a partly settled region to one in a well developed state of cultivation was experienced, also, by the regions tributary to the other lines of railway constructed in Illinois. Along the Illinois Central many new towns were started, and the older ones developed rapidly (29). The freight which this road annually turned over to the Galena and Chicago Union was more than a hundred million pounds, while that which the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy contributed was more than five hundred million pounds (30). This growth in towns, in freight, and in the general development throughout the tributary country, was due to the many advantages which the railroads offered. Previous to the building of railroads, exports were either sent down the river to the St. Louis market or hauled across the country to Chi-

cago at such high rates of transportation that, as was the condition in Stephenson (31) and DuPage (32) Counties, nothing was left as profit for the farmers. In Bureau County between 1840 and 1852, wheat was sent to the southern market and often sold for but 25 cents per bushel (33). On the other hand, the farmers from Ogle County as late as 1852 hauled wheat to Chicago in wagons. But even this method of disposal involved the time and expense of a six-day trip, in return for which 50 or 60 cents per bushel was received (34). In exchange for this undesirable situation, the railroad gave a cash market easily accessible to the farmer (35). Thus these new conditions furnished the stimuli for the general development which took place between 1850 and 1860 in the country tributary to these railroads.

As a result of the increased prices paid for produce, and hence of the larger returns to the farmer for his labor, this country was looked upon as a desirable agricultural section. Immigration increased, lands were taken up, and farms were placed under cultivation. Land prices rose at once. In Will County, prairie land which could be bought in 1852 for Congress prices, was in 1856 worth $10.00 per acre, and farms worth $6.00 per acre at the earlier date sold in 1856 at from $20.00 to $25.00 (36). A little farther to the north, in Winnebago County, lands selling at the earlier date for $1.25, sold, after the railroads had passed through the country, for from $12.00 to $25.00 per acre (37). But little prairie land was to be had in DuPage County by 1856, and farm land was worth from $8.00 to $30.00 and $40.00 per acre (38); while in Lee County between 1852 and 1856, land increased ten-fold in value, and sold at from $50.00 to $100.00 an acre (39). The land granted by Congress to the Illinois Central Railroad, and lying along that road, which, previous to this period, had been for years offered in vain at $1.25 per acre, was worth in 1852 on the average, $5.00, and four years later sold for $20.00, $25.00 and $30.00 per acre (40).

The total cash value of farms in this area increased from one to six million dollars. In 1860 the farms of Henry County were worth $5,274,000, more than seventeen times the valuation placed upon them a decade earlier. Carroll County multiplied her total farm value by almost five; Stark, Bureau

and DeKalb each by six, and Whiteside and Lee each by seven. Throughout this whole section of the State the price of land was greatly advanced, increasing to five, eight and ten times its earlier value.

Each of the counties in this area of the State also greatly increased its population between 1850 and 1860, while many of them even doubled and trebled it. In Warren County the total population increased from 8,000 to 18,000. The population of McDonough County increased from 7,000 to 20,000; Knox from 13,000 to 28,000; Stephenson from 11,000 to 25,000; and Winnebago from 11,000 to 24,000 inhabitants. The growth of the following counties is even more noticeable: Henry, with a population in 1850 of but 3,000 souls, had in 1860 more than 20,000. Stark gained in the number of inhabitants from 3,000 to 9,000; Whiteside from 5,000 to 18,000; Carroll from 4,000 to 11,000; and Lee from 5,000 to 17,000. Kendall, DeKalb and Bureau, having in 1850, 7,000; 7,000 and 8,000, respectively increased their population to 13,000; 19,000, and 26,000. These latter and more remarkable gains, as may be seen by looking at the map, took place in the counties most distant from the rivers and traversed by the railroads. In all the counties throughout the entire district, population became more dense. The total increase for the entire area was from 184,917 to 510,287 souls, or more than 250 per cent.

Then, too, the total farm acreage of each county in 1860 was always much larger, and often two, three and four times that of 1850. These gains were made for the most part in the interior counties. Warren's farm acreage in 1850 was 75,330, while in 1860 it was 188,161. In this decade the total farm acreage for McDonough County increased from 51,541 to 164,291; for Henry from 22,983 to 200,078; for Stark from 24,552 to 125,214 acres. Boone, Lake, Kane and DeKalb counties made similar gains, which fact reveals a healthy development of the country. Lands were being enclosed and rapidly placed under cultivation. Moreover, it was not held in a non-productive state, nor was it owned by non-residents. The tillers of the soil had selected this area as their home, and were living upon, and cultivating the land they possessed.

A resume of the preceding pages brings together these

facts: The prairie lying north of the Illinois River, and containing more than seven million acres, experienced between 1850 and 1860 a remarkable transformation. Previous to 1850 the prairie was sparsely settled and upon it but little labor in cultivation had been expended. This was true, for the most part, because of the lack of an inexpensive outlet for the surplus products. The expense of delivering exports to the market left nothing to reward the farmer for his labor. Expediency compelled settlers to shun the prairie and search for the river land, where commercial outlets were possible. The incoming of railroads reversed these conditions and made the prairie land, which was once undesirable, the most valued and the most highly sought land. Between 1850 and 1860 four main railroads extended their lines across this district, building up the country tributary to them. As a result, primarily, of the advantages thus presented, settlers poured into the country; and upon what, but a few years before was unbroken prairie land with separate and distinct settlements, more than half a million of people in 1860 were living and becoming prosperous. Over five-sevenths of the total acreage was then in farms and had a valuation of $117,501,342. The entire section had in every way greatly developed.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

(1) See Map No. II.
(2) This road went into operation as follows: to Elgin by January, 1850; the first twelve miles west of Elgin, Sept. 1, 1851; the next twelve, Oct. 8; the next twelve and to Belvidere, Dec. 3, 1851, and the last six March 10, 1852. Fifth Annual Report of the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad (1850), p. 8.
(3) History of Kane Co. (1878), p. 290.
(4) Ibid. This road was commenced in 1850 and finished in 1851. It was called the Chicago & Aurora after 1852.
(5) Seventh Annual report of G. & C. U. R. R.
(6) Eighth Annual Report of G. & C. U. R. R.
(7) See Map No. I.
(8) The Military Tract is composed of that territory lying between the Illinois and the Mississippi rivers.
(9) See Map of river counties.
(10) Hunt's Merchants' Magazine XXXIV, p. 496; the road was commenced on Apr. 10, 1852, and was opened to public, Feb. 22, 1854.
(11) See Map No. II.
(12) As many as 80 teams at a time could be found unloading their wheat at St. Charles to be shipped to the Chicago market. Chicago Daily Democrat, Feb. 2, 1850.
(13) Chicago Daily Democrat, Nov. 29, 1848.
(14) Quoted in the Chicago Daily Democrat, July 20, 1850.
(15) Chicago Daily Democrat, Dec. 30, 1851.
(16) In October, 1853, 60,000 bushels of wheat were stored at Marengo, awaiting shipment. Chicago Daily Democrat, Oct. 6, 1853.
(17) History of Whiteside County, p. 307.
(18) Quoted from the Sentinel, Jan. 1, 1860. History of Whiteside County (1877), p. 308.
(19) History of Carroll County (1878), p. 367.
(20) Ibid., p. 368.

(21) History of Whiteside County (1877), p. 167.

(22) History of Kendall County (Hicks), p. 272.

(23) History of Lee County (1881), p. 76.

(24) Gerhard: Illinois as It Is (1856), p. 417.

(25) Twelfth Annual report of the Directors of the G. & C. U. R. R.

(26) Twelfth Annual Report of the Directors of the G. & C. U. R. R. In these figures the reader should be careful to estimate correctly the value as evidence, for which they are submitted. Each year the road increased its mileage and consequently should logically increase its business, even with a country highly developed. This, however, does not alter the fact that, before the road was extended, there were not even good wagon roads in this section of the State, and the gain in the freight of this road indicated the transformation in a hitherto undeveloped prairie. Hence, every mile extension of railroad into this uncommercial country meant not only added freight to the road, but that much new country had been developed.

(27) Twelfth Annual Report of the Directors of the G. & C. U. R. R. The panic of 1857 brought a slight decrease, since it reduced prices and caused the farmers to hold their grain for a time.

(28) Merchandise and lumber, necessaries for the building up of a new country, formed the greater part of this westward freight. There were 13,585,860 pounds of merchandise shipped westward over the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad in 1851. In 1854 and 1855 these shipments were respectively 60,832,371 and 117,898,223. Lumber increased from 11,498,187 feet in 1851 to 62,540,090 in 1855. From 1850 to 1856, the tonnage away from the trade center rapidly increased—a characteristic of the commercial movement of a new country. After 1856, the tonnage westward decreased. In 1858 the merchandise had fallen to 101,090,530 pounds, and the lumber to 43,119,430 feet, a decrease of forty-two per cent. In 1860 the total westward tonnage was but 120,904 tons, a sum but little more than one-third that of 1857. The movements in a well established country should bear the relation of about four tons toward market to one in the opposite direction. The freight movements, then, along the G. & C. U. R. R. were in 1860, approaching this relationship, a fact which would indicate that the country through which it ran was approximating the condition of a well developed country.

(29) The population of Dunleith, which in 1850 was only five persons, increased to seven hundred in 1856. Elleroy, Lena, Scalesmound and Warren, with a population each of twenty-five or less, at the beginning of the period, increased each to a population of from 250 to 350. Freeport, having but 1,400 in 1850, numbered 5,000 inhabitants six years later, or had multiplied its population three and one-half times. Of the towns mentioned, the total population increased in these six years from a little more than two thousand to almost fifteen thousand souls.

(30) The Illinois Central touched the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad at two points, and by agreement, turned over to the latter road, in 1856, 106,355,200 pounds of freight, and in 1857, 124,743,360 pounds. This freight had a cash value respectively of $361,088.47 and $456,657.73. For these two years, the freight which the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy turned over to the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad was respectively 598,139,950 and 592,898,270 pounds.

(31) History of Stephenson County (1880), p. 272.

(32) History of DuPage County (1857), p. 169.

(33) Matson's History of Bureau County (1877), p. 400.

(34) History of Ogle County (1878), p. 507.

(35) Gerhard: Illinois As It Is, p. 372-378. These prices are taken from the papers of January, 1856, in various places which, it will be noted, are located at different distances from Chicago and in every part of the section considered:

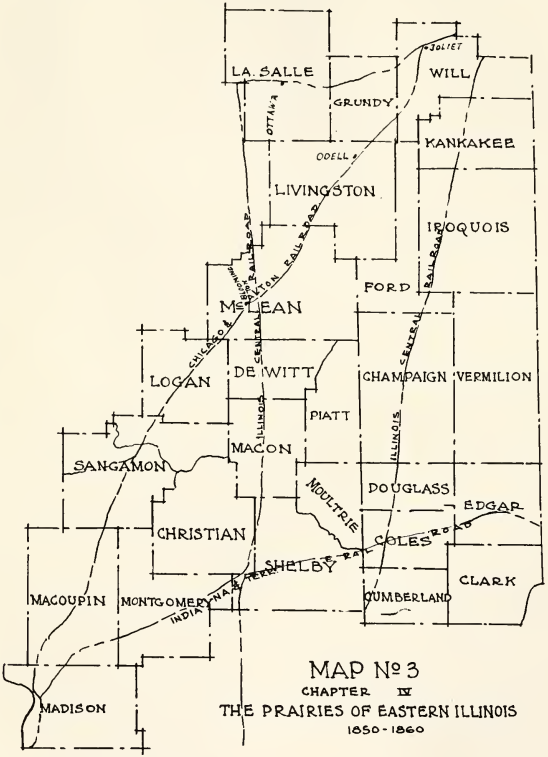
Market Prices, of Corn, January, 1856

Aurora	Shell	34– 35	Ear	35	per 75 lbs.
Batavia	"	42– 44	"	35	" 75 "
Belvidere	"	40	"	35	" 70 "
Chicago	"	55– 60			
Dixon	"	40	"	30	
Freeport	"	33– 36			
Galena	"		"	30–35	
Galesburg	"	30 per 60 lbs.			
La Salle	"	40		30	
Mendota	"	37			
Morris	"	35			
Rockford	"	45 per 60 lbs.		35	per 70 lbs.
Sterling	"	40 per 60 lbs.		30	per 60 lbs.

Market Prices of Wheat, January, 1856

Aurora	Winter	150– 60	Spring	125–130
Batavia	"	150– 60	"	135–140
Belvidere	"	125	"	112
Chicago	"	150–170	"	125–150
Dixon	"	145–150	"	120
Freeport	"	135–140	"	115–125
Galena	"	110–135	"	100–115
Galesburg	"	100		
La Salle	"	135–140	"	120–125
Mendota	"	125	"	120
Morris	"	130–135	"	110–120
Oquawka	"	120–135	"	115–120
Rockford	"	130–135	"	120–125
Sterling	"	125	"	115–118

(36) Gerhard, Illinois As It Is (1856), p. 403.
(37) Ibid.
(38) Ibid.
(39) Ibid.
(40) History of Ogle County (1878), p. 508.



MAP Nº 3

CHAPTER IV

THE PRAIRIES OF EASTERN ILLINOIS

1850-1860

CHAPTER IV

Railroads in the Prairie of Eastern Illinois, 1850-1860

In 1850 Congress granted to the State of Illinois more than 2,500,000 acres of land, the money derived from which was to be used in the construction of a north and south line of transportation across the State. A company, independent of the State, yet later the recipient of this grant, was immediately organized and began to build the road known as the Illinois Central. The Chicago branch of this road gave direct overland connection between Chicago and the mouth of the Ohio River, and ran across the central part of the prairie of Eastern Illinois (1) and between the sources of the rivers running on either side, to the Wabash on the one hand and the Illinois River on the other. Through the western part of this same prairie was constructed the main line of the road. Thus, the Illinois Central, which was completed in 1856, gave two lines of communication across this section of the state. The Chicago and Alton, which nearly paralleled the Chicago branch of the Illinois Central, was also built during this period (2). It furnished another north and south route, connected Chicago and Alton, two important commercial centers, and ran through the most southern part of the unopened prairie. The systems now known as the Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific (3), the Rock Island, and the Michigan Central were built at this time. Besides these many railroads running in various directions, the Illinois and Michigan Canal had been constructed, which gave another commercial route and made the territory through which it passed much more valuable. These railroads, together with the canal, furnished a system of communication with a primary commercial center.

No sooner was the Illinois Central Railroad surveyed than new life sprang into existence along the proposed line, and upon the completion of the road the tributary country was

dotted with towns and new farm houses (4). This road at the time of its location passed through "the most sparsely settled portion of the State. At several points it was nearly a day's journey across unbroken prairie from one habitation to another" (5). Southeasterly from Chicago the engineers, in laying out the road, found an almost unbroken wild extending for over 130 miles. Mr. Ackerman, writing of the conditions along the Chicago branch of the Illinois Central, said: "In 1853 we rode for twenty miles on this division without seeing a tree, a house, or any living thing, save an occasional prairie dog" (6). Herds of deer roamed over the prairie. But by 1856 "these immense uncultivated tracts" had been transformed into well cultivated farms which were contributing many million bushels of excellent grain to the general produce of the State (7).

Comparison of the census reports of 1850 and 1860 serves to reveal the extent of the development which the prairie region of Eastern Illinois underwent in this period. In McLean County, for instance, the population almost trebled. Her improved area was but 92,540 acres at the beginning of the period; while in 1860 it was more than three times as great. The value of her farms increased from $517,169 to $3,035,168. In 1860 the county produced 84,422 bushels of wheat and 906,186 bushels of corn, as against 27,125 bushels of wheat and 311,115 bushels of corn in 1850. The county revenue, amounting to $5,923.07 in 1852, was raised to $15,299.38 in 1853, and by 1857 to $30,453.15. The historian of McLean County has well said of this period: "Real estate rose rapidly, building went on actively, business revived, markets were brought within reach, lumber was plenty, immigration set in again, and farmers began to venture out upon the ocean of fertile lands that everywhere surrounded the island-like groves" (8). Throughout the county new life was taken on, new energy expended, and large results were obtained.

The town of Bloomington, situated on the Chicago and Alton near the junction with the Illinois Central, had in 1850 a population of but 2,200 (9). At that time the life of the place was quiet, prices for produce were low, and there was but little traffic (10). But when the "steam horse" entered the town new energy was created, "property changed hands,

and log cabins and little frame houses gave place to large and beautiful residences. Flower gardens and tastefully arranged shrubberies were desecrated with the erecting of large blocks of three storied brick stores; and the very earth seemed to tremble with the heavy march of improvement'' (11). Bloomington became a thriving commercial center for the surrounding country.

In Livingston County, also, which for the most part remained unsettled until this date, a similar change took place. Nebraska township received its first settler in 1855, while as late as 1853 Odell Township was the home of the deer and the ''unscared wolf'' (12). The land where the town of Odell now stands was purchased of the government in 1853, and the first grain was shipped from the station in 1855 (13). So sparsely was the whole section settled at that time that ''with the exception of a few small and unthrifty villages, there was scarcely a human habitation between Joliet and Bloomington'' (14). The whole county of Livingston had in 1850 a population of only 1,552. By 1860 the population had increased to 11,632, the improved farms grew in the same period from 13,334 acres to 110,738, and the total farm value, from $114,407 to $3,430,450. In 1850 but 15,517 bushels of wheat were raised, as against 146,037 bushels in 1860, while the increase in corn was from 129,785 to 1,002,300 bushels.

The full opportunities offered by these rich prairies were, however, not yet fully embraced,—due in part to the following reasons: As early as 1852, and before the railroad was built, though its location had been determined, speculators had entered almost all the land and had placed high values upon it (15). Consequently, farms were not immediately enclosed and placed under cultivation. The panic of 1857 followed closely upon the sales that were made, and compelled the surrender of much land which had been purchased for cultivation. It was not, then, until after the results of the panic had passed and the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw Railroad had begun to offer new advantages, that the most rapid settlement of the county took place.

Grundy and Will, the counties lying immediately north of the area just considered and near Chicago, are crossed by the Des Plaines, the Kankakee, and the Illinois Rivers (16).

Because of these advantages an early development was brought about in Will County and by 1850 it had a population of 16,703 and an improved farm area of 102,578 acres, valued at almost $2,000,000. In Grundy County, however, other factors entered which retarded development. Though the soil was as rich as that in Will County, only 15,916 acres, or a little more than one-seventh of the improved area of Will County was improved farm land by 1850. This slow development was due to the fact that the Illinois and Michigan Canal Company had possessed itself of the greater portion of the county and held it at such high prices that the land could not be profitably cultivated.

Nevertheless, with the incoming of railroads, these retarding factors were overcome and a great development took place in both counties. By 1860 the population had increased in Will to 29,264, and in Grundy to 10,362 souls—more than three times the population of 1850. Towns sprang up along the railroad, as also along the canal. Spencer and Frankfort were built upon the Michigan Central and New Lenox and Mokena upon the Rock Island. The Chicago and Alton passed through Joliet, Wilmington and Lockport, giving to each a direct route to Chicago, and hence, an impetus to growth (17). Morris, the county seat of Grundy, took on new life because of the canal and the Rock Island Railroad (18). In 1857 this town had a population of 3,500 and shipped 547,466 bushels of corn, 62,862 bushels of wheat, and sold 3,788,464 feet of lumber. The land of Grundy County, too, had then passed from the hands of speculators. In 1859 there was not a section of land owned in Grundy County by the canal company, and even in 1856 there was no state land in either county (19). Almost the entire area had been cut into farms, and by 1860 Grundy had an improved farm area of 132,971, and Will of 243,086 acres. The total farm values were then $2,573,250 and $6,824,080 respectively. Will County produced 251,983 bushels of wheat and 1,020,989 of corn; Grundy 54,334 bushels of wheat and 709,895 of corn. At the close of the period these counties were well developed, populous, and wealthy sections of the State.

La Salle County, unlike these other counties, because of its location on the river, had an early development, yet the great

transformation came during the decade just previous to 1860. During those ten years the population increased from 17,815 to 48,272; towns had sprung up on every commercial channel, and the agricultural region was well settled. These towns, too, did a thriving business. Tonica, a village with a population of less than 200, forwarded in 1855 17,734 bushels of wheat and 32,456 of corn. The entire value of freight forwarded for the year was $8,786.68, while 736,454 feet of lumber were received at the place. Mendota, situated at the junction of the Illinois Central and the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroads, likewise experienced an unprecedented growth. "Nothing was heard but the sound of carpenters' tools, and by the autumn of 1854 the population was nearly 1,000" (20). A trade in lumber was immediately started, which for some years was the most important branch of business in town. Peru, with no considerable population until the building of the canal, numbered in 1858, 4,700 souls. In 1856, exclusive of the grain purchased by the mill, the amount bought directly from the producers was 900,000 bushels (21). La Salle, within a mile of this place, was, in 1858, one of the most important commercial and mining towns on the Illinois River. In the decade the population increased from 200 to 3,500, and the freight shipped from the town was valued at $43,516.09. Ottawa by 1858 had become a large contributing point to the grain trade of Chicago (22). Throughout the county new commercial stations were created and old ones given a new importance.

This development is to be seen not only in the growth of towns, but also of the country. The tide of prosperity "rapidly settled up the unoccupied prairie in the county and largely added to the improvements of the older settlers. The county assumed the appearance of an old settled region. Comfortable houses and barns sprang up with a rapidity probably unequalled by any other locality. Orchards and cultivated groves transformed the once naked prairie to an abode of comfort and beauty" (23). The area in improved farms increased from 93,098 to 240,463 acres, and in value farms increased from $1,088,483, to $7,715,294. The corn yield was 1,305,655 in 1860, as against 637,483 bushels in 1850. La Salle, although one of the older prairie counties, was quickened, given new life, and developed greatly.

Logan, Sangamon, Madison, Macoupin and Montgomery counties lie in the western part of this prairie, and differ from the more inland counties in that they were on the early lines of transportation (the rivers), and consequently received an early settlement. They felt little impetus to growth from the construction of railroads until about 1859, and as a result of these combined conditions made less development between 1850 and 1860 than did the counties lying farther east and at a greater distance from the Illinois and Mississippi rivers (24). The most noticeable thing in Sangamon is that, although the total farm area increased only from 323,272 to 379,512 acres, the advance in value was from $3,315,513 to $11,866,486. Macoupin's farm value increased from $1,679,466 to $6,481,325, and her production of wheat from 77,022 to 306,670 bushels. Madison, in 1850 the most thickly settled county in this entire prairie section, increased her population about one-third. Her total farm area was increased very little, but the gain in farm value was from $2,435,154 to $6,052,957, while Montgomery's gain was from $660,765 to $3,336,107. In Logan County the improved farm acreage increased from 46,699 to 191,035 acres, an advance of four hundred per cent. The value of the total farm area at the close of the period, $4,889,350, was five times the earlier value. These western counties made their greatest increase in improved farm acreage and in farm value. They were settled under the influence of steamboat transportation. When the railroads made profitable the better improvement and cultivation of their farms, new and higher values were given to them.

Although the transformation in these western counties was slight, that in the interior counties was very great (25). The territory of Kankakee, Ford and Douglas counties was not sufficiently settled even in 1850 to warrant organization, yet by 1860 each of these counties had a considerable population (26).

A similar development took place in Christian, Piatt, Macon and Moultrie, the remaining interior counties. Settlement was at first slight, but with the incoming of railroads which offered local markets at Decatur and Springfield, better than the former markets of St. Louis, the hidden resources of the

country became manifest (27). In Macon County, townships without a settler previous to 1850, as was Illini, were thickly settled in 1860. Austin Township, whose first settlement dates no earlier than 1845, had in 1855, one year after the completion of the railroad, less than 300 acres of uncultivated soil (28). In Christian County the same influences were at work building up another portion of this undeveloped prairie. Locust Township had but few settlers before 1850. The vacant lands of Greenwood Township, upon the constructing of the road, were immediately taken up and land prices rose from 75 cents to $5.00, $10.00 and $20.00 per acre. In 1850 Assumption Township was a wild, uninhabited prairie, and, upon the spot now occupied by the flourishing town of Assumption, a boundless waste of country met the vision, where herds of deer and the wily prairie wolf roamed at will. But the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad and the location of Tacusa caused a wonderful change. A thrifty class of immigrants at once came in and the prairie was dotted with farm houses (29).

Portions of Moultrie County entirely unsettled in 1850 were only awaiting the construction of the railroad. After this improvement, farms in these interior counties were enclosed and placed under cultivation, the acreage being sometimes trebled or even quadrupled during the decade (30). The entire interior area, in a state of waste in 1850, was, by 1860, transformed into a well-settled and well-cultivated farming district.

Previous to the construction of railroads, the conquest of new land came not by sweeping in whole territories at once, but by the slow and gradual process known to the early American settler. The frontier line was never fixed and never regular, but it was constantly advancing. Its foremost point was always upon the river, and the small prairies between were later overrun. This was the process of development which the border prairie counties, Coles, Cumberland, Clark and Edgar, were undergoing when the railroads revolutionized this method and threw them open to the vitalizing influences which were transforming the waste prairie into rich, productive farms. Under the former method of settlement these counties had received a considerable development. But

with the new stimulus offered by the railroad transportation, they took on a new growth. In Coles County, land that had been in the market for over thirty years found a ready sale at advanced prices (31). Paris, by furnishing a good grain market, greatly stimulated development in Edgar County. So in each of these periphery prairie counties a considerable development took place in the years immediately preceding 1860.

Many agencies stimulated development in this eastern prairie section. Of this, the Illinois Central was the principal one, yet the Chicago and Alton Railroad and the Illinois and Michigan Canal performed their parts in building up the western portion of the district, as did the Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific in the southern part. Each of these factors contributed its share. But, taken as a whole, the several roads formed one system which gave life to the whole prairie section. During the decade the total increase in population was from 187,062 to 420,989. The total farm acreage was almost doubled, and the improved farm area increased from 1,263,-152 to 4,059,288 acres. The total farm value multiplied itself four and a half times, and at the close of the period was $115,632,711. This transformation was brought about primarily by the railroads which opened up and vitalized the unsettled district.

A summary of the above pages compels these conclusions: In 1850, the great prairie of the State lying to the east of the Illinois River, was for the most part undeveloped; and that across this prairie there were no commercial highways. At that time the sparse settlements which had been made upon it were dependent for commercial transportation upon teams traveling over poor unworked roads, and upon the river. Because of this condition, land had little value, toil upon the soil was almost profitless, the life of the agriculturalist was one of uncertainty, and but little was held before him as a reward for his life of hardship and danger. No inducement was offered the foreigner or the restless American to make this area his permanent home. The country was then without commercial highways and hence remained undeveloped. But between 1850 and 1860 railroads were built across this section and transportation throughout the entire area resulted. Each

road had its influence and formed a part of the system which gave to every portion of the district a commercial outlet, and good cash markets for their surplus products. This meant profit to the laborer and inducement to the immigrant. As a result, the entire prairie, for the most part unsettled in 1850, became within a decade a well settled, thoroughly cultivated and highly productive section of the State. These years were the beginning of the railroad era, a period of economic revolution. Formerly, men faced the river, but during this decade they turned and faced the railroad. With back to the river, whose protective banks were no longer the desired places for home-building, the pioneer from this time centered his interests mainly in the vast stretch of prairie lying before him. Timberland, earlier the most prized land, decreased in relative value, while the open prairie was given new and unexpected values. The problem of the prairie had been solved and the waste area of the State was utilized, a fact which brought about a great development of this portion of the State.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

(1) See Map No. III.
(2) Brink McDonough & Company, History of Macon County, Illinois (Philadelphia 1880), p. 42.
(3) The Wabash, St. Louis, and Pacific has had different corporate names. It was first known as the Great Western, then the Toledo, Wabash and Western, and finally, it was given the name under which it is now known.
(4) Report of the General Superintendent, 1856.
(5) Fergus. Hist. Series No. XXIII. p. 42.
(6) Ibid.
(7) Gerhard, F., Illinois As It Is (Chicago 1857), p. 404.
(8) Le Baron, Jr. and Co., Wm. History of McLean County, Illinois, Chicago (1879), p. 253.
(9) Gazetteer of McLean County (1866), gives population of Bloomington, 1611 in 1850 and but 800 in 1845.
(10) Gazetteer of McLean County (1866), p. 10.
(11) Ibid. History of McLean County (1879), p. 337.
(12) History of Livingston County (1878), p. 468.
(13) History of Livingston County (1878), p. 360.
(14) History of Livingston County (1878), p. 359.
(15) Chicago Daily Democrat, Sept. 26, 1851.
(16) See Map No. III.
(17) History of Will County (1878), p. 336. The Rock Island Railroad was constructed across them in 1852, and the Chicago and Alton in 1854. The following year the Illinois Central crossed the eastern part of Will, and the Joliet and Northern Indiana Railroad, commonly called the "Cut-Off" and now owned and controlled by the Michigan Central, crossed the county in an east and west direction, giving Joliet, the county seat, connection with the eastern market.
(18) Curtiss, D. S. Western Portraiture and Emigrants' Guide (New York 1852), p.67.
(19) Report of General Assembly, Illinois, 1859, Vol. II, p. 722.
(20) History of La Salle County (1877), p. 314.
(21) The amount was less the following year, owing not to lack of production, but to reluctance of the farmers to sell.
(22) Directory of La Salle County (1858), p. 210.
(23) Baldwin, Elmer. History of La Salle County (Chicago 1877), p. 212.

(24) The Illinois Central, which was early constructed, did not pass through these counties. The Chicago and Alton and the Alton & Terre Haute were constructed through them and placed in successful operation only at the close of the period now being considered.
(25) The "interior counties" are the counties lying to the east of those just considered and farther away from the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.
(26) Illinois Blue Book, 1905.
(27) History of Macon County (Philadelphia 1880), p. 42. The Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific and the Illinois Central were both constructed in 1854.
(28) Ibid., p. 215.
(29) History of Christian County (Philadelphia 1880), p. 142.
(30) Combined Histories of Shelby and Moultrie Counties, Illinois (Philadelphia 1881), p. 233.
(31) History of Coles County, Illinois (Chicago 1879), p. 274.

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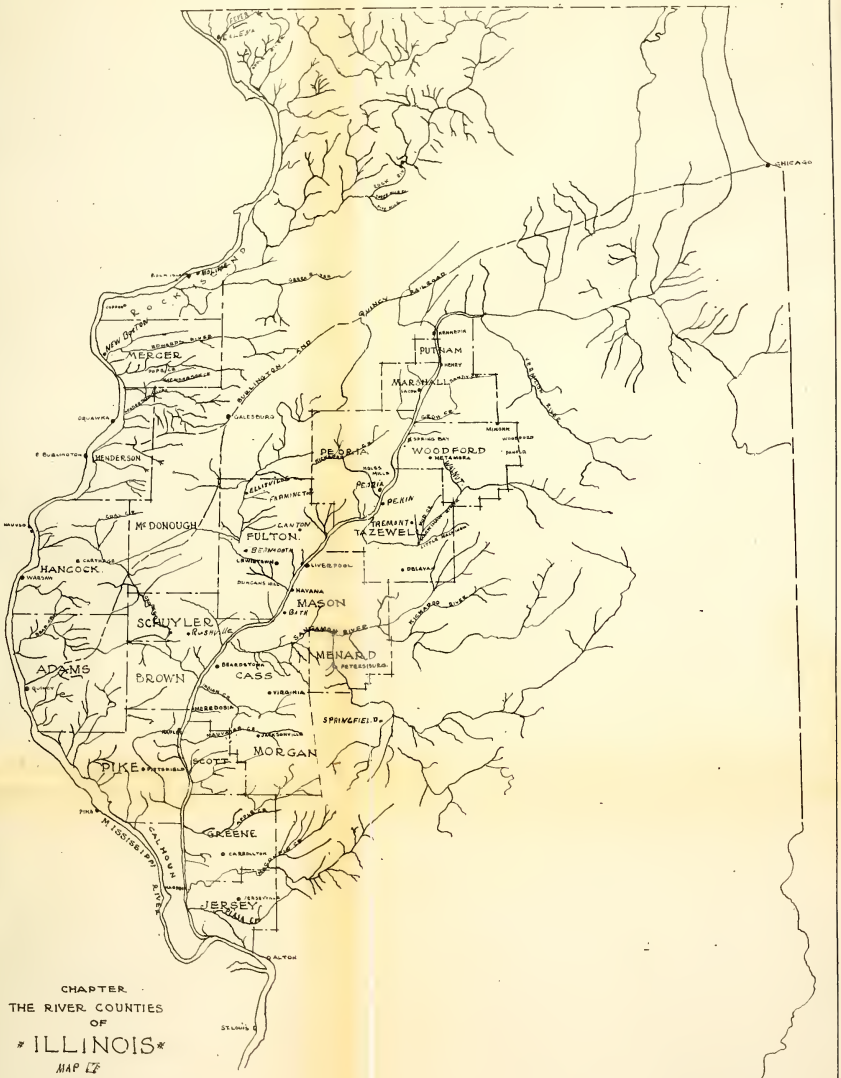
(29) History of Christian County (Philadelphia 1880), p. 142.
(30) Combined Histories of Shelby and Moultrie Counties, Illinois (Philadelphia 1881), p. 233.
(31) History of Coles County, Illinois (Chicago 1879), p. 274.



CHAPTER

THE RIVER COUNTIES

OF

ILLINOIS

MAP IX

FEVER
GALENA
ROCK ISLAND
MOLINE
COPPER
NEW BOSTON
EDWARDS RIVER
MERCER
POPE CR
HENDERSON CR
HENDERSON
BURLINGTON
OQUAWKA
GALESBURG
E. BURLINGTON
HENDERSON
ELLISVILLE
FARMINGT
COAL CR
MAUVOO
Mc DONOUGH
FULTON.
BERMUDA
CARTHAGE
HANCOCK.
WARSAW
LEWISTOWN
DUNCANS MILLS
SCHUYLER
RUSHVILLE
ADAMS
BEARDSTOWN

CHAPTER V

Transportation in the Upper Illinois River Counties Before 1860

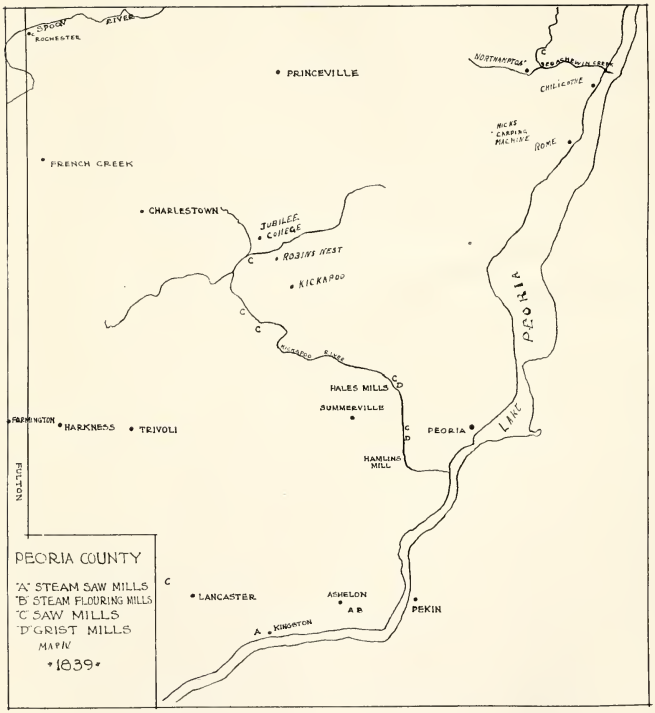
The counties included in this group are Peoria, Marshall and Woodford (1). The change in the methods of transportation in this area and the influence of transportation agencies upon its development as a whole, can best be shown by a somewhat intensive study of Peoria County as illustrating the history of the entire area. The Village of Peoria on the Illinois River midway between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi, early became a center of American fur trading companies, and for that reason received its first American pioneer at an early time. Settlement, however, was very slow, for by 1832 the town comprised but fifteen or twenty log cabins and two frame houses (2). After about 1835 immigration was stimulated by steam navigation and between that date and 1837 population increased at the rate of one hundred and fifty per cent. per annum, more than during the sixteen years just previous to that period (3).

The surrounding country was also slow in settlement during the early years. In 1821 there was not a white habitation between Peoria and Chicago, and by 1825 the population of the whole north half of the State, including Chicago and Galena, was only 1,286 (4). In 1827 that of the entire county of Peoria was but thirty or forty (5). Two years later the Galena Advertiser said: "He who travels by land, after leaving the little village of Peoria on the Illinois River, passing alternately forests and prairies for the distance of 170 miles, sees no trace of civilization; all is rude and wild and uncultivated, just as nature fashioned it"(6). Soon, however, settlements were started along the Senachwine Creek in what is now Peoria County. The "upper settlement," located west of the present site of Chillicothe and fifteen miles north of

Peoria, was made in 1824 (7). Medina Township received its first pioneer the same year and Chillicothe in 1829 (8). The valley of the Senachwine Creek was one of the earliest settled portions of Peoria County.

To the west and northwest of Peoria, in what is now Livingstone, Kickapoo and Jubilee townships, rapid settlement began about 1834 (9). At this date Kickapoo received its first settlement, and the year following a pioneer named Hale erected a sawmill on the Kickapoo Creek (10). Around this as a nucleus and along the river banks, the country was rapidly settled, although no part of the land in the Kickapoo Valley was brought into market until the year 1835, and not all of it until 1838; yet by 1839 nearly all that was tillable had been entered, chiefly by actual residents (11). When in 1836 Clark D. Powell made his settlement in the center of this valley, he could not see a cabin, though his view extended for several miles around. Nine months later, within this same radius, some twelve or fourteen houses had arisen; large fields of land had been plowed; fences made and two towns laid off (12). In 1834 or 1835 Mr. Coolidge made a claim thirteen miles northwest of Peoria, when there were not more than four or five families within as many miles of him and probably not one between him and Peoria (13). Within the same extent, there were in 1839 upward of a hundred families. Settlement along the Kickapoo Creek during these few years was very rapid. If one could have taken the road which leaves this valley three miles to the west of Peoria, and leads across the open prairie directly to Farmington, he might have viewed another part of the county. Immigration into this prairie in 1838 was so heavy that the price of improved prairie lands had by that time been raised from $1.25 to $5.00 per acre, while near Peoria where the land was more completely settled, it was valued at from $15.00 to $25.00 per acre. Thus the prairie lying directly west from Peoria had received more than a sparse settlement before 1838.

The extreme north-western part of Peoria County lies beyond the head waters of the Kickapoo, and between that point and the timber of the Spoon, a river which courses its way for about seven miles across the corner of the county. On this high rolling prairie, though twenty-one miles distant


SPOON RIVER
ROCHESTER
PRINCEVILLE
NORTHAMPTON
CHILLICOTHE
MICKS CARDING MACHINE
ROME
FRENCH CREEK
CHARLESTOWN
JUBILEE COLLEGE
ROBINS NEST
KICKAPOO
KICKAPOO CREEK
PEORIA LAKE
HALES MILLS
SUMMERVILLE
FARMINGTON
HARKNESS
TRIVOLI
PEORIA
HAMLINS MILL
FULTON
PEORIA COUNTY
'A' STEAM SAW MILLS
'B' STEAM FLOURING MILLS
'C' SAW MILLS
'D' GRIST MILLS
MAP IN
1839
LANCASTER
ASHELON
A.P.
PEKIN
KINGSTON

from Peoria, the Village of Charlestown sprang up. This place was situated on the main traveled road leading from the Illinois River at Peoria to Oquawka on the Mississippi and also on that running from Canton to Galena. Hence it was a central point for travelers going in either direction. Because of these advantages of location this town was started as early as 1836, though the surrounding country was then wholly unsettled. This area, however, was soon developed, and as a result the towns grew very rapidly. Directly south of this place, "Walker's Settlement" was started, in which a large area of land was placed under cultivation, while to the northeast a short distance, near the termination of the Kickapoo timber, many more farms were opened and improved. Thus travel across the prairie and heavy immigration were the reasons for the origin and growth of Charlestown, and also the development of the surrounding prairie.

In 1839 a traveler passing to the northwest of Peoria by the Great Mounds, and over the Knoxville road, might see from each prairie eminence a dozen or sometimes twenty farms, the greater number of which had been improved since 1835 (15). Lumber, for erecting the dwellings and improving these newly enclosed farms, was secured at Prince's sawmill, six miles to the northwest and on the Spoon River. Princeville, located on the county road leading from Peoria and also on the road from Canton to Galena, could give a market for most exports. Cattle and pork were taken from there to Galena; some pork was sent to Peoria and to the populated district of Iowa lying directly to the west. Home consumption, too, created by the needs of the immigrant, gave a market for grain (16). Because of these favorable conditions, settlement in and around Princeville was rapid.

During this early period of settlement, lack of good transportation facilities made the flour and sawmills, and the blacksmith shop necessary institutions. Although there were eleven sawmills in Peoria County in 1839, yet even this number could not supply the demand for lumber, and it was necessary to patronize mills in other counties (17). Blacksmith shops were of little less importance to the pioneer. The work of a blacksmith was a necessity, the location of a shop an essential to every neighborhood, and though there

were very many in the county, farmers would oftentimes have to take their plows twenty-five or thirty miles to have them sharpened and pointed. Because of the absolute necessity of a blacksmith, his first coming into a new settlement was noted in its annals as an important addition and as an agency which would make the settlement more prosperous. In Peoria County a number of these shops were located as soon as the demand called for them. In the southern part, in Trivoli Township, one was set up in 1834 (18). In Chillicothe the first settler was a blacksmith (19). Thus Peoria County was early supplied with the two primary essentials, sawmills and a blacksmith shop.

More important than either the sawmill or the blacksmith shop were the flour mills, since for the pioneer they made sustenance possible. With Cincinnati and St. Louis the nearest markets where flour could be secured, with commerce slow and uncertain, and freight rates high, flour was often scarce and wheat bread a luxury. For, although the price of wheat was often low, flour sold at a high rate (20). This was true because there were not mills enough to grind the wheat. Flour and grist mills were necessary not only to furnish food, but also to provide a market for wheat and corn and a surplus of flour for exportation. This condition made the milling business profitable and brought flour and grist mills to a settlement soon after it was started. The first flour mill in the vicinity of Peoria was erected in 1830 by John Hamlin and John Sharp (21). This mill was three miles west of Peoria on Kickapoo Creek. It had two runs of stones and made about fifty barrels of flour per day. It was one of the best mills in the whole country and made Peoria the milling center for a large tributary area. Wheat was brought from the town of Canton, twenty-five miles, and from places in Fulton, McLean and Tazewell counties. In 1839 there were five flour mills and one grist mill in Peoria County, which gave an added impetus to its development (22).

The milling interests, thus early started, prospered, and exercised an important influence on this and the surrounding counties. Mr. Davis, writing of Hale's Mill in 1838, said: "The increased value it will give to land is not worth mentioning compared with its great public and private influence."

Mills were public benefactions and, being encouraged on every hand, continued to prosper. In 1850 the town of Peoria had flour mills in operation, and the amount of flour exported and used for home consumption was 33,753 barrels, valued at $151,877.50 (24). Five years later the value of the flour manufactured was estimated at $650,000. In 1858, with six mills in operation, 38,000 barrels were manufactured. Thus the milling industry continued to grow throughout the period of our study (25).

In Peoria County, then, as we have seen, though pioneers began to build cabins as early as 1819, rapid immigration did not follow until about 1835. Settlements were first made upon the Senachwine and Kickapoo creeks, and along the Spoon and Illinois rivers. In the prairie, farms were first enclosed upon the overland wagon roads. Along these roads, too, many villages were built, such as Charlestown and Princeville. Previous to the use of good transportation facilities, settlement was slow, commerce was light, and pioneer activities centered around the blacksmith shops and the saw and flour mills. But when steamboats began to run regularly on the rivers, these conditions were quickly changed. The river towns became markets for the farmers' produce, more rapid settlement of the country at once followed, and Peoria as the commercial center began a new growth. These early advantages gave the town sufficient importance so that when the railroads were built it was made a railroad center and consequently received a stimulus to further growth. The development of the town and county of Peoria started because they possessed good mill sites, was stimulated by the rise of navigation, and later was given a new impetus by the building of railroads.

Peoria was a typical river county, and for this reason has been studied somewhat in detail. In the remaining counties it will be necessary to trace only the larger relationships, and the dissimiliar features of their development. Putnam and Marshall, in 1831, with nearly the whole of Bureau and Stark counties, were placed under the one organization of Putnam County. At that time there had been only a single steamer above Peoria and few pioneers had settled in what now forms Putnam and Marshall counties, the first settler

being Thomas Hartzell, an Indian trader, who settled in Putnam County at the present site of Hennepin in 1816 (26). In 1831 a ferry at that place, previously established by him as a private enterprise, was made a public crossing. As a result, Hennepin became more widely known, and was the center from which later development was directed. Five miles to the east of this place, on the west line of Granville Township, was Union Grove, another early center for the pioneer. In the extreme south-eastern corner of this same township was located Magnolia, the oldest settled point in Putnam. Other places of early settlement in eastern Putnam were Strawn's Prairie, and Ox Bow Prairie. In the western part of the county but few early locations were chosen. Thus in the early period Putnam had only a few neighborhoods or groups of settlements. Steamboats ran only irregularly and there was no common stimulus sufficiently strong to develop the entire county. At a later time, however, the construction of the Bureau Valley Railroad, through the western part of the county, of the Illinois and Michigan Canal through the central part, and of the Illinois Central Railroad not far from the eastern boundary, furnished new commercial advantage, which gave the county a steady development, and transformed it from one having many neighborhoods into one united commercial unit. Thus, during the period between 1850 and 1860, primitive conditions were succeeded by a thriving commercial life, the western part of the county was brought under cultivation (27), Hennepin grew rapidly, and the eastern part of the county became more densely populated (28). The county was small and the population consequently was not large. But the general development throughout the later period was steady and substantial (29).

Marshall County, divided by the Illinois River and lying next south of Putnam, was not set off from Putnam until 1839 (30). This county, like Putnam, but unlike Peoria, had no stimulus common to all its parts during the early period sufficient to give it a uniform development. The portion lying east of the river was settled earlier than that on the west side, and for different reasons. This eastern part, drained by small mill streams and provided with timber and beautiful stretches of prairie, attracted the pioneer at a very early date (31). The later development was stimulated by the

Illinois Central Railroad. The western part of the county received very few early settlers (32). What few did come in depended upon the Peoria and Galena wagon road for a commercial outlet. But the entire western half of the county was not brought under cultivation until after the construction of the Bureau Valley Railroad. The construction of three commercial lines across the county brought the entire area into a well-developed state of cultivation.

The growth of Henry, a small town upon the Illinois River, was at first very slight, there being but five houses erected between 1833 and 1838 (33). The establishment of a blacksmith shop in 1837 and the location of a postoffice in the town gave business and enterprise a small stimulus, but even by 1848 the number of families was only twenty-four. After that time, however, growth was more rapid. Ben Bower and Brothers in that year put up a flour mill, which, besides furnishing flour, gave a market for grain. Soon afterwards the Illinois and Michigan Canal furnished a commercial outlet, and Henry became a grain-buying and shipping center. The first shipment of grain by the canal occurred in 1852. Meanwhile, the town had grown rapidly, and in 1858 was incorporated as a city, having then a population of 1,306. Immediately following this rapid growth, the Bureau Valley Railroad was constructed into the place, giving it an additional impetus.

The history of Lacon, twelve miles south of Henry on the Illinois River, is similar to that of its neighbor (34). A ferry was started in 1832, and the year following Swan and Deming opened the first store. In 1834 there were only four houses, but by 1838 there were fifty-five or sixty houses and a population of three hundred (35). Previous to this date highways had been surveyed east toward Metamora, and to Caledonia on the way to Hennepin; and westward to the intersection of the Peoria and Galena road. Flour and grist mills, too, had been erected and were doing a good business. The success of these mills and the general development of the town encouraged the erection of the Phoenix and the Model Mill, each at a cost of $42,000. These mills made the town an important grain and milling center for an area extending many miles in all directions.

Other milling interests also sprang into importance and prospered during these years. A substantial steam sawmill was put in operation in 1836 by Barrows and Case. The Peoria Register and North-Western Gazetteer said of it: "The steam sawmill cuts 1,500 feet of lumber per day and has manufactured during the past year 300,000 feet of lumber" (36). A second sawmill was built in 1838 by Dennis Barney, who also erected at the same time a wool-carding and fulling machine. Farmers had begun early to raise sheep, and with the building of the wool-carding mill a new impetus was given the industry. This modest venture grew in a short time to a first-class carding and wool-dressing mill, 45 by 46 feet, three stories high (37). During the early period the sawmills and wool-carding and fulling machines added to the city's industries, and supplied the needs of the country's development.

But of still greater importance than the milling industries was the pork-packing business. The first pork packing in Lacon was done in 1837 by Fenn, Howe and Company. Soon afterwards, Swan went into the business, cutting up in 1839 3,000 hogs (38). The following year Job Fisher concentrated his entire packing business at Lacon, and by 1849-50 the undertaking had so prospered as to warrant the expenditure of $10,000 in the erection of a large brick packing house, which was then the most complete of its kind in the West. The number of hogs packed varied from 750 (the number packed the first year) to 11,000, and the amount annually paid out varied from $50,000 to $300,000 (39). "It was no unusual thing for steamers to take on an entire cargo of pork and its products and proceed to New Orleans without breaking bulk. It [this industry] furnished a market for all the surrounding country, and hogs were driven here from territory now covered by eleven counties. * * * The rapid development of the country and the competence that many men enjoy today is due to this firm. They made a market for hogs when there was none other between Chicago and St. Louis and paid good money when most needed" (40). The pork-packing industry stimulated growth in Lacon and the surrounding country.

As the steamboat was stimulating the development of Lacon and Henry and the surrounding country in the period between 1835 and 1850, so between 1850 and 1860 the railroad and the

Illinois and Michigan Canal transformed the entire county into a wealthy and populous district. In 1850 the population of Marshall was 5,180, which increased during the next ten years to 13,437 (41). The improved farm area at this latter date was almost five times the unimproved area, there being 132,746 acres of the former and but 26,840 acres of the latter. The total farm value in 1860 was $4,238,975, as against $820,-834 in 1850. The development in the county due to these later forces was very great in the decade between 1850 and 1860, and gave to Marshall County a goodly prosperity.

Woodford County lying next south of Marshall and entirely on the east side of the Illinois River, is drained by a number of small streams. Richland, Partridge, Ten Mile and Blue creeks are short and empty into the Illinois. Walnut Creek and Mackinaw River drain the southern part of the county. This latter stream rises to the east of Woodford, flows south-westerly across the corner of the county, entirely through Tazewell County, and into the Illinois River. Near its head waters the Vermilion rises and flows northward into the Illinois. With relation to these rivers, Woodford County forms the watershed. The western part is wooded by the timber of the Illinois, the southern by that of the Mackinaw, while the northern and eastern parts are prairie, the waters from which flow toward three water systems. This geographic position of the county has, in a large measure, determined its history.

The earliest settlements were along Panther Creek in the south-eastern part of the county, and in the western portion along Walnut and Partridge creeks. These different places continued to grow until in 1841 the population was sufficient to warrant the separate organization of the county. At this time Versailles, in Olive Township, was made the county seat. This fact, together with the location of the Lexington and Peoria State road through the same township gave to Versailles and the surrounding country a considerable importance (42). The few years following this period carried the town to its zenith of power. Bowling Green, to the east in Palatine Township, was also reaping the benefits of these advantages, and was for a time very prosperous. The building of the Toledo, Peoria & Warsaw Railroad, however, relegated this wagon road to an unimportant place, and as a result Ver-

sailles and Bowling Green rapidly declined, and Eureka, on the railroad, began its commercial growth (43).

In the western part of the county, Spring Bay and Metamora were early started. But their development was slow until the rise of steam navigation upon the river. Metamora, though an inland town, enjoyed some of the advantages of river transportation, and because of that fact was enabled to do an extensive business and outstrip the other inland markets (44). Spring Bay began an unusual growth about 1843. In that year Munn and Scott started in the grain business at this place. The following year, 1844, they erected a grain warehouse, with a capacity of 8,000 to 10,000 bushels. Two others were soon erected, and Spring Bay became a grain center for a large area of country. During the next twenty years the grain trade at Spring Bay equalled that at any other point on the Illinois River. Nearly the whole county hauled grain to that place, and a hundred wagons on the street in one day was a common occurrence. "The amount of grain shipped from this point before the era of railroads was truly wonderful, and more than one handsome little fortune was made in this unpretending village" (45). Spring Bay was a strong business point almost the equal of Peoria and Pekin in energy and amount of business. "It was," said the county historian in 1875, "a shipping point of importance, with one of the best steamboat landings on the Illinois River. * * * But times with it have likewise changed; its stores and business houses are closed up, its business is dead and everything around it speaks of decay" (46). In the early struggle steam navigation won for Spring Bay the supremacy over its rivals. With the decline of river navigation and the rise of railroads, this supremacy was in turn given to other points. The town arose and declined with the rise and decline of the commercial channel upon which it was started.

In the southern and western portions of Woodford County early commercial routes gave prominence to early towns. The change of routes brought about their decline, and the building of new towns in their stead. The north-eastern part of the county, which had no commercial outlets, remained undeveloped, and only upon the construction of the Illinois Central was this area placed under cultivation. The con-

struction of this road furnished a common stimulus for the development of the entire eastern part of the county. The greater part of Roanoke Township was in its natural state in 1850 (47). "Not a house, fence, or tree could be seen north, west or south; there were but five or six cabins only, in the whole township" (48), yet by 1855 her population was about 200. Along Panther Creek in Greene township there were in 1840 only twelve families, and settlement was slow until 1850. But in 1855, when the township was organized, there was a population of about 240. The first settlement in Minonk was not made until 1854, and in 1855 Panola and Minonk, together with seventy-two square miles, had but fifty inhabitants (49). Yet two years later when organization was given to the township, and after the railroad had been built, Minonk had a population of more than a hundred and Panola of about two hundred and fifty. Linn and Clayton have a history almost identical with each other and similar to that of these other and more eastern townships. Linn received its second settler in 1844. But few others came until the first activity along the railroad began. Then population increased, and by 1855 there were 150 inhabitants in the township. Clayton's population was but half that number. By 1860 these six townships had increased their total population to 3,644. Because of the lack of commercial outlets the country was almost valueless; but by the construction of a railroad great development immediately followed. The proximity to market gave value and development to the formerly open prairie, and caused a transfer of commercial and agricultural activity from near the rivers to near the railroads.

Viewing the section as a whole, few settlements were made before 1820, though in general development was earlier than in the more distant prairie. Steam navigation above Peoria was of little early importance and consequently stimulated the early settlement of this country but slightly. This area, too, was removed from the older and southern part of the State and was for that reason slow in developing. During the early period of settlement the pioneers centered their activities around the blacksmith shops and the saw and flour mills. This was the result of poor transportation facilities which made necessary these small industrial institutions. Early markets grew up because they were on overland roads,

and lost their importance with the decline of those lines. In Woodford County the ascendancy of Versailles and Bowling Green in commercial affairs was lost when the railroads relegated to an unimportant place the transportation line upon which they were situated—the Lexington and Peoria State Road. Like these towns, Spring Bay arose and fell with the rise and decline of the transportation agency serving it. Poor transportation facilities retarded the early settlement; steam navigation stimulated more rapid growth and built up a few thriving commercial stations. Railroads brought the hitherto undeveloped sections under cultivation, built up new business centers, and supplanted in importance all other commercial highways. Transportation in the upper Illinois River counties influenced the history of that entire section.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

(1) See Map of River Counties.
(2) The site of Peoria had been selected as the seat of an Indian village and later of a French town. Yet, although the point was well known when Americans first came into this area, nevertheless, development was slow. Ballance, C. The History of Peoria, Illinois (Peoria, Illinois 1870), p. 40; Schoolcraft, Henry R. Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley (New York 1825), p. 307; History of Peoria County, Illinois, p. 449.
(3) Peoria Register and North-Western Gazetteer, April 1, 1837, gives the following data on the Population of Peoria: Jan. 1835, 418; July 1835, 550; October 1835, 811; Jan. 1837, 1,658.
(4) Schoolcraft's Travels, p. 316.
(5) Chicago Historical Manuscript, Vol. 17, Jos. M. Street, to Ninian Edwards.
(6) Galena Advertiser, Oct. 5, 1829.
(7) History of Peoria County (1880), p. 284.
(8) History of Peoria County (1880), p. 606.
(9) In the township histories, it is noted that with two or three exceptions the first settlements were not made until the early 30's indicating that settlement of the county in general did not begin until about that date.
(10) History of Peoria County (1880), p. 598.
(11) Peoria Reg. & N.-W. Gaz. Aug. 24, 1839.
(12) Ibid., April 1, 1837.
(13) Ibid., Sept. 14, 1839.
(14) Ibid., July 25, 1838. Ibid., May 26, 1838. Ibid., June 15, 1839.
(15) Peoria Reg. and N.-W. Gazetteer, May 11, 1839.
(16) Ibid., July 27, 1839. Corn in April 1839 was worth 20 to 25 cents at Princeville; potatoes 25 to 37; and oats 31 to 37 cents.
(17) Ibid., Apr. 13, 1839. History of Peoria County (1880), p. 598, p. 592.
(18) History of Peoria County (1880), p. 617.
(19) Ibid., p. 578.
(20) Ibid., p. 451. Peoria Reg. and N.-W. Gaz. 6/9/'38; Ibid., 8/29/'39. The price of flour fluctuated from a very low to a very high rate. In wet years when river transportation was good and also when mills could run on even the smallest streams, prices were low. But in a dry year when many mills were compelled to shut down for lack of power and when transportation was difficult, prices were forced to a high rate. The Hamlin Mill, located near Peoria, often shipped flour to St. Louis and received less than $1.50 per barrel. Yet in 1839 flour sold at Hale's mill (also near Peoria) for $7, even though wheat was then worth but 50 cents per bushel.
(21) History of Peoria County (1880), p. 451.
(22) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gaz. Aug. 24, 1838
(23) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gaz. June 9, 1838
(24) History of Peoria County (1880), p. 452.

(25) History of Peoria County (1880), p. 452. The milling industry of Peoria began to decline about 1870.
(26) Ellsworth's Putnam and Marshall, p. 137.
(27) Eighth Census. (Population), p. 99.
(28) Regan's Emigrants' Guide, p. 332.
(29) Seventh Census (Population), 1850, 3,924. Eighth Census (Population), 1860, 5,587. Eighth Census (Agriculture), p. 34. Improved farms 50,038 acres; unimproved farms, 20,019 acres; cash value of farms, $1,882,336.
(30) Historic Encyclopedia, p. 353.
(31) Ellsworth's Putnam and Marshall, p. 442. Belle Plaine township is watered by Crow Creek and Martin's Branch and has Hollenbeck Grove, Wildcat Grove, Four Mile Grove, and also Martin's Point, which places were all attractive to the early settlers. Robert Township was watered by Sandy Creek with the Little Sandy and its tributaries coming in from the north; and from the south the branches of Shaw, Myer, and Gaylord. Because of the streams this township also was settled very early.
(32) Ibid., p. 434. Evans and Bennington Townships were not placed under cultivation until after the establishment of Rutland, a station upon the Illinois Central.
(33) Peoria Register and North-Western Gazetteer, Sept. 22, 1838.
(34) Lacon was first known as Strawn's Landing. In 1831, when the town was laid out it took the name "Columbia." In 1836 the name "Lacon" was given to the town.
(35) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gaz., 9/22/1838; 5/26/1838.
(36) Peoria Reg. & N.-W. Gaz., 5/26/1838; Ellsworth's Putnam & Marshall, p. 333.
(37) Ellsworth's Putnam and Marshall, p. 333.
(38) Ellsworth's Putnam and Marshall, p. 535.
(39) Hogs packed in Lacon in 1849, 10,000; Prairie Farmer IX, 199; 1850, Prairie Farmer X. 166, 11,500; Regan's Emigrants' Guide, p. 332, 1851, 13,500; 1852, 9,500.
(40) Ellsworth's Putnam and Marshall, p. 336.
(41) Census reports for the respective years.
(42) History of Woodford County (1878), p. 322.
(43) Ibid., p. 445.
(44) History of Woodford County, p. 288. Peter H. Willard, who ran a store and grain buying business in Metamora, was a partner with Munn and Scott, the grain dealers of Spring Bay.
(45) Ibid., p. 306.
(46) Ibid., p. 248.
(47) Ibid., p. 334.
(48) Ibid., p. 340.
(49) Ibid., p. 400.

CHAPTER VI

Transportation in the Lower Illinois and Mississippi River Counties Previous to 1860

In the lands along the lower Illinois and Mississippi rivers, settlement began earlier than in either the prairie or the upper river counties. Soon after 1800 some settlers came to this lower country, but before about 1835 there was no means of transportation other than by wagons across the unbroken prairie and by floating on rafts and piroques down the shallow rivers, consequently life was very simple and remained so until steamboats began to run regularly on the rivers. During this distinctively frontier period when easy connections with the outside world were impossible, commerce of necessity was very light. The immediate problem for the pioneer was to eke out a mere existence, and in doing so almost everything needful was secured by some means in the community.

The nature of this life, and the kind of institutions which were needed to supply its wants can be seen from a study of the early activities and institutions of Fulton County. In an earlier chapter the influence of these industrial beginnings in Peoria County has been shown. But in this lower region where the pioneer life covered a longer period than in the upper river counties, they played a still greater part in the development of the country. The flour and grist mill seem to have had a very important place in the life of that period. The first device of any kind which was used for cracking or grinding grain was the mortar or tin grater (1). Then the hand mill was introduced, which was a great improvement over the former method (2). This in time gave way to the band mill and mills propelled by horse and water power (3). With the coming of these conveniences the necessaries of life were more easily secured, a fact which gave an

added impetus to immigration. So important was the establishment of these mills considered, that by the right of "ad quod damnum" they could be placed upon any man's land (4). This encouragement and the many seats which the rivers and creeks offered brought about the establishment in a few years of many, both saw and grist mills, the most important of which were at Ellisville and at Bernadotte (5). In Joshua Township there was still another mill which did more than a local business (6). Mr. Duncan, too, built an early grist mill of sufficient importance to give its name to a town which grew up around it (7). Thus, during the period of settlement in Fulton County flour mills were an essential to the sustenance of the pioneers already settled, a stimulus to further immigration, and in many cases the specific reason for the definite location and building up of towns.

The conditions which gave the flour mills their importance also made necessary other primitive institutions and methods for securing a livelihood. The blacksmith shop was an absolute essential and was patronized even though sometimes it was necessary to go fifteen or twenty miles (8). Food was scarce and clothing was made from the dressed skins of wild animals. There were not enough sawmills to supply the demand placed upon them. Coffins, even, were made of logs in which a receptacle for the body was hollowed out. There was very little buying and selling, for money was scarce. Trade consisted mostly in the exchange of one article for another (9). Occasionally a "farmer would load a flat boat with beeswax, honey, tallow, and peltries, with perhaps a few bushels of wheat or corn," and float it down the Illinois River to St. Louis (10). Here he found a market in which he exchanged his goods for groceries. A little later, when stores were established within these neighborhoods, goods were always sold on twelve months' time and payment made with the proceeds of the farm. When the crops were sold and the merchants satisfied, the surplus was paid out in orders on the stores to laboring men and other creditors. Such was the primitive life in Fulton County previous to and during part of the steamboat era.

The very conditions of this early life caused all activity to center near the river. The flour mills were generally pro-

pelled by water power, and the sawmills were of course in the midst of the timbers, and for that reason they, too, were along the rivers. Added to these facts was the natural preference of the frontiersman for the timber land. He chose to make his "clearing" and plow among the stumps rather than to venture out into the open prairie. This preference, however, was not founded entirely upon prejudice. The agricultural implements of the time were not suited to break and cultivate the prairie. It was next to impossible to turn over the tangled heavy prairie sods, or with that done, to plant and care for a crop. For all these reasons the main neighborhoods and towns were located near the rivers; Bernadotte, Ellisville, and Lewistown were all on or near Spoon River, Canton was near Big Creek, while Liverpool was on the Illinois River.

These towns, started because they were near mill sites, received a new impetus to growth when steamboats began to run. Although growth was slow previous to 1835, these new stimuli greatly increased their population and commerce (11). This back country was then for the first time made easily accessible to the outside world. Immigrants, consequently, began to pour in. New settlements were made and the towns developed rapidly. By 1839 Lewistown had fifty houses, four stores, and two taverns. Canton likewise took on new life and by 1837 had a population of 200 or 225, which was increased in 1838 to two hundred houses and a population of 780. In the number and variety of its mechanics, Canton then probably excelled any other town in the Military Tract save, perhaps, Quincy (12).

Other towns were started and incorporated at this time. Bernadotte was laid out in 1836, and before two years had passed the population increased to 150 or 200 inhabitants. Farmington, in 1835, had two frame houses and one log cabin, but during the following year eighteen houses were erected, and by 1839 the town had a population of 250 (13). Directly east of this place and on the Peoria Road there were, in 1838, twelve or fifteen houses where there had been but one eighteen months before. Ellisville, platted in 1836, had within two years from that time, five stores and a population of 130.

Fairview likewise received a considerable influx of immigration at this period.

In other and surrounding counties similar forces were at work. In the settlement of Tazewell immigrants would come by boat as far as Peoria, the head of navigation, and seek homes near the splendid mill sites which that county possesses, or if coming in schooners, would settle on the prairie of Tazewell rather than search for better locations. While this county was thus being quite thickly populated, Menard received but few pioneers and Mason was scarcely settled at all. In 1837 the entire northern part of Mason County had but twelve voters (14). This was due in a large measure to the fact that the county was low, wet and marshy, and was considered an unhealthy waste area. But the significant thing in the history of these counties is that previous to the running of steamboats, what settlements were made were at mill sites or in the timbers along the smaller streams. In this way grew up Salem, Indian Point, Concord Neighborhood, Clary's Grove, and Baker's Settlement in Menard County (15), Tremont and many smaller towns in Tazewell, and later Havana and Bath in Mason County.

With the rise of steamboat navigation, however, Pekin on the Illinois River gained the ascendency over all these other points and became the supply station for a section of country which extended out about seventy miles from a north-eastern to a southern direction. One authority, writing from Pekin in 1838, said: "The amount of business done by our forwarding and commission merchants is very great. Two large warehouses are constantly filled with goods. During a residence in this town of nearly two years we have known but one instance of a steamboat passing up and down the river without depositing freight at the wharf. There are seven dry goods stores, one wholesale grocery and liquor store, and two houses for slaughtering and packing pork" (16). This latter industry gave to the towns of the tributary country more business, probably, than any other one interest. The Tazewell Mirror of 1849 said: "Our slaughtering establishments are crowded with fat hogs and the packing houses have all they can do" (17). In that year Pekin slaughtered 30,000 hogs (18). Thus in this group of counties early settlement

was slow, small villages grew up, but none of them gained any importance until steamboats began to visit the port of Pekin. From that time Pekin outstripped its competitors, built large warehouses and industrial establishments and became the commercial center for the entire area.

In the settlement of Schuyler and Brown on the west, and of Cass, Morgan and Scott on the east side of the Illinois River, three towns sprang up, the history of which is typical of the general development of the surrounding area. Schuyler and Brown began settlement about 1823, and since their location was favorable, immigration was heavy (19). The thickly populated counties of Adams and Hancock bordered them upon the west and along their eastern border coursed the waters of the Illinois. Because of this general location, Rushville, the county seat of Schuyler, grew very rapidly. It was started in 1827, and immediately became the distributing point for immigrants who desired to settle in the northern and western parts of the county. In 1830 this town had a dozen houses, and by 1837 there were more than 400 and a population of 1,200 (20). At that time Rushville was "the largest inland town in this Military Tract", and the commercial center for the rapidly developing counties of Schuyler and Brown (21).

On the other side of the Illinois River, Jacksonville, the seat of government of what is now Morgan County, gained considerable importance during this early period. It was laid out in 1824 and by 1830 the population was more than 400 (22). Four years later the town had a population of 1800, and the number of houses had greatly increased. This rapid development was due to its location with relation to the main routes of travel. The country to the east, south and southwest of Jacksonville was at that time well settled and roads leading from this area to the country north and northwest, then rapidly settling up, naturally centered at Jacksonville, and made it the point of distribution throughout the period of settlement. This factor was all the more important in the building of Jacksonville, since immigrants who settled in this area directly to the north came for the most part in prairie schooners rather than by the river.

But with the rise of river navigation, and with the country

partly settled, conditions were changed. Overland routes gave way to the river as a highway of travel; the prairie schooner was replaced by the "floating palace"; and the points upon the river which could give better markets than the inland towns surpassed in importance all other places. Typical of this transformation is the growth of Beardstown and the consequent relegation of the former towns of importance to a secondary position. The first settler of Beardstown came to that place very early, but the town was not laid out until 1829 (23), and its existence was not then known in all parts of the State (24). Steamboats, however, had begun to visit the place in 1828 and the town soon began to grow. By 1837 three additions had been made to the town, which was then widely known as a commercial point (25). Even by 1833 it had become the center from which "most towns in the interior of the State got their supplies of goods and from which their produce was shipped to market" (26). More business was done there in 1834 than in any other place in the State (27). Two steam flouring mills, a grist mill, a steam sawmill, a brewery, and a distillery, besides many warehouses and storehouses, were at that time either in operation or being built. Many steamboats were then constantly employed in the Beardstown trade. In this year, 1836, 450 arrivals and departures were made from her port (28), and by 1837 she had become the largest pork market in the State (29). From that time throughout the period of steam navigation on the rivers, this town did such a heavy export and import business that there was almost a continuous line of teams hauling to and from the interior towns (30). It had won the commercial supremacy over all competing internal towns.

In the remaining counties of this lower river section but few contrasts can be made between the river and prairie sections, for the counties are small and there may be said to be neither an inland area nor inland towns in distinction from the river towns. Rather the method of study will be to show the rate of development and the influences of transportation facilities.

Along the Macoupin and Piasa creeks, in what is now Jersey and Greene counties, settlements were made as early

as 1815. With the signing of the treaty of Edwardsville in 1818, by which the Indians relinquished their claim to the territory of these counties, immigration became heavy and the population rapidly increased. In this same year, when Mr. Thomas, the first settler of Greene County, located not far from Piasa Creek, the prairie for a circuit of fifteen miles to the north, east and west of him was solitary and trackless (31). But by 1820 almost every township within both Greene and Jersey had received some pioneers (32). In 1830 the population of these counties was 7,674, which was increased by 1835 to 12,174, and by 1840 to 16,464 (33). The period of settlement for these river counties was during the early years of steam navigation. Population increased more rapidly between 1830 and 1840 than during any other decade. Between 1850 and 1860, however, when railroads crossed the counties, large additions were made to their population.

Pike and Calhoun, the only two counties lying between and touching both the Illinois and the Mississippi, were low marshes, and, though receiving early settlers, did not for some time reach a high degree of development. Pike was the first county organized in the Military Tract, and though it then included the greater part of northern Illinois, what is the Pike County of today was the center of life and activity of the entire region. The first permanent settlement was made in 1820; the first store was opened in 1826. During these years, when merchandise had to be secured at St. Louis and New Orleans, life was hard, suffering was occasioned by the want of food, and settlement was slow (34). Not until 1826 did these pioneers raise their first wheat and grind it into flour, and three more years passed before the first mill was erected. Calhoun County was likewise but little settled during this period. The population was unstable, owing to the fact that most of Calhoun's early settlers were in the lumber business (35). In 1830 her population was small, and the number increased but little during the next five years. Pike settled more rapidly and continued throughout the period to increase its population and development (36). The great increase was in the first decade after the rise of steam navigation as the chief agency in transportation. Calhoun County's greatest gain, too, was in the latter half of the same

decade, the population increasing from 1,091 in 1835 to 1,741 in 1840. Her population in 1860 was only 5,144. The greatest pre-railroad development there was during the decade between 1830 and 1840. Railroads, however, gave a new development just previous to 1860.

Adams and Hancock counties, lying just above Pike and on the Mississippi River, are about midway between the northern and southern boundaries of the State. They are drained by a number of short rivers flowing into the Mississippi, and by the branches of Crooked and Walnut creeks flowing into the Illinois. The timber lands, being along the main rivers, were mostly in the western part, where settlement first began. In the extreme eastern part, along the smaller creeks, only sparse settlements were made. The prairies between were not claimed till a late date. Settlement began about 1820, but was very slow until 1834 or 1835. This slow development was caused in part by inefficient means of transportation and poor trading facilities and, in part, because much of the land had been granted to soldiers and was not subject to entry. In Adams County the main settled sections previous to 1834 were along Bear and Rock creeks. Very few came to the outlying territory of Quincy, possibly, because the land was considered unhealthy (38). To the north, certainly, the land was low, swampy, and unfit for cultivation, but to the south was a fine farming area extending for a distance of many miles (39). This land, owned by nonresidents, was not settled until a later date (40). After 1835, however, and in spite of these conditions, immigration poured into the county. Between 1830 and 1860 the population increased from 2,186 to 41,323 (41). Unlike that of most river counties, the main development was not made in one decade. The growth beginning in 1835 was continued steadily throughout the period.

A study of the commercial movements gives the explanation for this development. Previous to 1827, when the first store in Adams County was established, trade consisted merely in neighborhood exchanges (42). With the founding of Quincy that place soon became the mart for a large area. Its growth was slow during the first two or three years, but the population and commerce of the place steadily increased

(43). In 1831 flour and bacon were imported, but within less than five years these same articles were being exported (44). The number of stores, too, had increased and vessels were running regularly from the port of Quincy (45). Food products were not imported at heavy expense, but were secured in the home market (46). Money was no longer sent out of the county, but was brought in in payment for goods exported. This period marked a new era for Quincy, which grew more rapidly than any other town in the State, with possibly the exception of Chicago (47). The impetus given to the town and its commerce by river navigation was maintained until the construction of railroads gave a new energy to its growth. Quincy has always been a center of the principal commercial highways—first of the river and then of the railroad (48). As a result, its growth and the development of the surrounding country have been steady and substantial.

Two-thirds of Hancock County is prairie land (49). The timber is in the western part along the Mississippi River, and in the southern and eastern part along the branches of Crooked and Bear creeks. The first settlements were in the western portion of the county. The early voting places indicate that the centers of early population were at the headwaters of Bear Creek near the line of Adams County, at Fort Edwards near the mouth of Edwards River, and at the little village of Venus, the head of the rapids (50). There were but two residents on Crooked Creek in 1830. Although the Black Hawk War retarded settlement, the population increased between 1830 and 1835 from 438 to 3,249 (51). These pioneers had located near the river, for as late as 1837 there were probably not more than a hundred improvements in all the prairie a mile distant from the timber (52). The county historian, writing in 1880, pointed out the distinct differences between the two divisions of the county which existed at that time and which were due to the early settlement. In the western half there were but few early settlers still remaining, for the first pioneers had come, lived along the river working at river trades, and had later "pulled stakes." On the eastern or prairie side settlers came later, but remained, and as a result the eastern half had a large proportion of settlers who had come to the county previous to 1840 (53).

Henderson, Mercer and Rock Island are the remaining counties in this division. For the most part they are drained by small streams running into the Mississippi. The main rivers of Henderson and Mercer counties are the Pope, the Edwards, and the Henderson. The first settlement made was in the vicinity of New Boston. In 1827 the Denison family came to this point to supply the boats with fuel (54). The next settlement was ten miles up Edwards River, at a point then known as Sugar Grove. Farther up this same river a third settlement was started. This was at Farlow's Grove and was known as "Richland Settlement." As with Edwards River, so settlements were extended along Pope Creek and North Henderson. Mercer had previously been started and was located on the Mississippi about fourteen miles from New Boston. It admitted of convenient access to the timber, stone, and coal along both the Pope and the Edwards and their branches. It was also on the direct route from New Boston to Hennepin and from Oquawka to Rock Island. The two places, New Boston and Mercer, were the only towns of Mercer County and furnished the only market for its exports and imports. After the Black Hawk War immigration was rapid, and by 1840 the population of Mercer County was 2,352. This was increased in 1845 to 4,297, and in 1850 to 5,246. The great change came during the next decade, the population in 1860 being 15,042. Mercer County was organized in 1835, but because there were no large ports the county developed slowly until the railroad era.

Henderson County was not organized until 1841. Previous to this date, Oquawka, the principal landing for some distance either up or down the river, had become the entrepot for regions beyond the borders of Henderson County. Much of the shipping from Mercer and the inland counties was done from this port until the construction of railroads (55). The general development of this country, stimulated by water and later by rail traffic, was steady throughout the period. Rock Island County, the head of Indian activities previous to and during the Black Hawk War, received but little development before that time. On the north side of Rock River there was in 1833 only one house, and on the south side, on the broad smooth prairies sweeping around the Rock River

to the present site of Moline, only a few farm houses could be seen, and they were located in the far distant hills (56). Stephenson, an early town on the present site of Rock Island, was not laid out until 1835 (57). As a whole, the county settled rapidly after 1836. Besides the stimulus which river navigation gave to the town, it had a United States fort which gave publicity. For years the fort had been known and used as one of the guiding points for travelers passing from the Sangamon District to the lead region at Galena (58). There was, too, at this place a good landing, which furnished a market and consequently made the town a point of exchange for the products and merchandise of the rich and well-settled Rock River Valley (59). The railroad added, in later years, to the advantages given by these early conditions and Rock Island County continued a steady development from 1835 to 1860. The greatest increase in population was during the last decade, but growth throughout the period was steady and substantial (60).

Thus the territory along the lower Illinois and the Mississippi rivers began development earlier than either the prairie or the upper Illinois River counties, and consequently the period of settlement was longer than in either of the other sections. During the early years pioneers located not necessarily close to a market, but where sustenance could most easily be secured. Towns, as Duncan, Ellisville and Lewistown, sprang up near mill sites; or, as Jacksonville and Rushville, because their location on overland roads made them convenient points of distribution for immigrants. The use of steamboats on the river, however, changed the economic emphasis and instead of mere sustenance the hope of reward became the dominating thought of the pioneer. The river towns, because of their position, were enabled to give good prices for the exports which the farmers desired to sell, and could bring imports into the country more cheaply than could towns located on any other transportation line. They thus became distributing points for the entire inland country. Pekin, Beardstown, Quincy, and Oquawka were the most important of these towns, and during the steamboat era did a heavy commercial and industrial business, which stimulated development throughout the entire section. Thus in the lower

Illinois and the Mississippi River counties, lack of efficient transportation facilities made mere existence the dominant question, and the places where sustenance might be secured—mill sites—the most attractive places for the pioneer. Steam navigation later gave the river points a new significance and hastened development in the tributary country. Railroads stimulated an ever greater development in the territory as a whole, and made the towns upon them the commercial centers of the district.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

(1) For a description of the various mills used, see the following references: History of Schuyler and Brown (1882), p. 61; History of Cass County (1882), p. 157; Swan, Alonzo M., Canton, Its Pioneers and History (Canton, Illinois 1871), p. 15. "These 'graters' were perforated sheets of tin bowed on to a board so that the shape was similar to half of a section of a stove pipe; the rough edges of the perforated tin would tear the grains of corn, when it was rubbed briskly over its surface, and by an hour's hard labor, meal enough for a small cake could be manufactured." Perryman, E. M. Pioneer Life in Illinois, p. 53: (Pana, Ill, 1907). "They would cut down a pretty large oak tree and saw off a block about three feet long, square both ends, set it upon end, build a hot fire in the middle of the upper end, and watch it to keep it from burning too far out, and by burning two or three days, would get a hole burned out in the shape of a basin; then hang a heavy maul to a spring pole, so that the spring pole would greatly raise the maul; then shell some corn and put it in and put in a little water to toughen the husk. Then stand there and jerk the maul down on the corn and beat it into meal. And it took a good deal of jerking to make a little meal."

(2) Swan's Canton, p. 8. Described by Gov. John Reynolds: "In the hand mill the stones are smaller than those of the horse mill (the lower stone was fixed and the upper movable) and are propelled by man and woman power. A hole is made in the upper stone and a staff of wood is put in it and the other end of the staff is put through a hole in a plank above, so that the whole is free to act. One or two persons take hold of this staff and turn the upper stone with as much velocity as possible. An eye is made in the upper stone through which the corn is let into the mill, with the hand in small quantities to suit the mill, instead of the hopper."

(3) History of Fulton County, (1879), p. 513. A band mill was so called because a rawhide band was put upon a large drive wheel in the place of cogs; it saved the gearing of the mill. These mills constituted the lowest and cheapest order of horse mill. Pins were put in the place of cogs and around them the band was placed. These pins might be changed in holes made for the purpose so that the band might be tightened when desired.

(4) Ibid., 194, 320, 515; Swan's Canton, p. 14 and 15. In 1818 a saw mill was erected on Otter Creek, but was soon carried away by high water. This early milling enterprise was probably the first in the Military Tract. The first mill of any kind in the northern part of the county was Fraker's band-mill, which was erected in 1823 in Canton Township, near Fairview bridge. About 1824, Jacob Ellis located a water mill within three miles of Canton on Big Creek. To the north of Fairview bridge, John Coleman early established a mill. Of more importance than any of these mills, however, was the one located at Ellisville, on the Spoon, a river which furnished power through the year.

(5) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gazetteer, Aug. 4, 1838; Aug. 31, 1839.

(6) History of Fulton County (1879), p. 725. This mill was erected by Mr. Gardiner, who did a large business and for many years shipped flour to New York City. He made flat boats upon which he would float his produce to St. Louis, starting from Copperas Creek Landing. After these boats were unloaded, he would sell them to go further south. At one time he built a thirty ton keel-boat and carried it on wheels to Copperas Creek, where it was launched. When the Illinois River was low and he could not run a boat to St. Louis, he would take a team of four yoke oxen and a team of horses and put on about 100 bushels of wheat and start for Chicago, where he would get 60 cents to 62½ cents per bushel, when wheat would bring only 23 cents at home. It would consume a month's time to make these trips. He would return with dry goods and other necessities.

(7) Ibid., p. 712. From 1840 to 1855 this was the largest mill within a radius of fifteen or twenty miles.

(8) Ibid., p. 199. "Mr. Andrews tells us he remembers Mr. Barnes shouldering up the plow share of his large prairie breaking-plow and going with it on foot to Lewistown to the blacksmith shop." Mr. Barnes lived 2½ miles north of where Canton now is.

(9) Ibid., 229. Coon skins passed as currency in many places up to 1835, and values were frequently expressed in coon skins.

(10) History of Fulton County (1879), p. 204, 219.
(11) History of Fulton County (1879), p. 204, 517; Swan's Canton, p. 5.
(12) Swan's Canton, p. 12, 98, 100. Previous to 1830 Canton had no dry good stores, since merchandise was usually shipped in from St. Louis. Between 1830 and 1855 the pork packing industry became quite large. After that date and because Canton had become a railroad center, live stock was shipped and the slaughtering business declined.
(13) Swan's Canton, p. 12: Peoria Register and N.-W. Gazetteer, Ap. 7, 1838.
(14) History of Menard and Mason (1879), p. 428. The present townships of Havana, Sherman, Pennsylvania, Allen's Grove, Forest City and Quiver. In 1850, Allen's Grove township had but eight or ten log cabins and four-fifths of the land was held by Congress. Quiver Township received its first settlement about 1837. There were no pioneers in Forest City Township before 1840, and but five houses in 1842. In Pennsylvania Township permanent locations were not made until 1849. In the entire county there were but two important settlements, Havana and Bath. During the period previous to 1843, Bath and the lower end of the county were the more important. Between 1843 and 1851, Havana and the upper end of the county developed rapidly and won the seat of government and commercial supremacy of the county.
(15) History of Menard and Mason (1879), p. 202; p. 321. Historic Encyclopedia, p. 307.
(16) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gazetteer, June 1, 1838.
(17) Prairie Farmer IX, p. 102.
(18) Quoted from the St. Louis Intelligencer, Jan. 9, 1852; 1849, 30,000, Prairie Farmer IX, p. 199; 1850, 25,000, Prairie Farmer X, p. 166; 1851, 26,500, Regan's Emigrants' Guide, p. 332; 1852, 16,000, Regan's Emigrants' Guide, 332.
(19) Combined History of Schuyler and Brown (1882), p. 57.
(20) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gazetteer; Apr. 1, 1837. History of Schuyler and Brown (1882), p. 153, gives the population in 1836 as 1,500.
(21) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gazetteer, Apr. 1, 1837.
(22) Eames, Charles M., Historic Morgan and Classic Jacksonville (Jacksonville, Illinois 1885), p. 68. History of Cass County (1882), p. 18.
(23) History of Cass County (1882), p. 108.
(24) Hall, James. Notes on the Western States (Philadelphia 1838), p. 265: "In 1830 a consignment of goods for Beardstown, Illinois, was landed by mistake at Shawneetown, in the same State, where they remained for some time because it was not known where Beardstown was. They had heard of Beard's Ferry on the Illinois River and knew its exact position, and were not a little surprised to hear that a town had suddenly started into existence, between which and St. Louis several steamboats were regularly plying, before even its name was known to the people residing on the shores of the Ohio."
(25) History of Cass County (1882), p. 108.
(26) Ibid., p. 30.
(27) Ibid., p. 31.
(28) Steele, Mrs. Eliza R. A Summer's Journey in the West (New York 1841), p. 167.
(29) Historic Morgan, p. 16: History of Menard and Mason Counties (1879), p. 676; History of Cass County, p. 14; "Before the railroad era, when the river was the main channel for carrying merchandise and produce, Beardstown was in possession of the most extensive pork trade of any western town, competing even with Cincinnati. From 40,000 to 70,000 hogs were slaughtered annually." Western Journal II, p. 339, 1849, 46,500 hogs slaughtered; Journal VI, p. 191, 1850, 57,000 hogs slaughtered; Journal VI, p. 191, 1851, 35,000 hogs slaughtered. Also Peoria Register and N.-W. Gazetteer, 10/21/1837.
(30) French, A. W. Early Reminiscences (Springfield, Ill. 1901), p. 61. In the spring of 1848 "I spent a week or two in Beardstown. This was an ambitious place—had a brick tavern and a landing, and was the entrepot and the outlet of nearly all of the salable products of a large part of the State. A traveler between Springfield and Beardstown would rarely be out of sight of heavily loaded wagons, carrying out the productions or bringing in the merchants' goods."
(31) History of Greene County (1879), p. 243.
(32) Ibid., p. 246.
(33) State and National census for the respective years. The statistics in the census reports for Jersey County were not given separately until 1840.

Year	Greene	Jersey
1830	7,674	.....
1836	12,274	.....
1840	11,963	4,501
1845	11,562	5,659
1850	12,429	7,354
1860	16,093	12,051

(34) History of Pike County (1880), p. 211.

(35) Pooley, William Vipond, Early Settlements of Illinois, p. 398. The author gives no authority for his statement.

(36) State and Federal census reports for respective years.

Year	Pike County Population
1830	2,393
1835	6,037
1840	11,736
1845	15,972
1850	18,819
1860	27,249

(37) Murray, Williamson and Phelps, History of Adams County, Illinois (Chicago 1879), p. 277. Coon skins, maple sugar, deer hides, feathers, wild honey, beeswax, and deer tallow were the current circulating medium of the people.

(38) Atwater, Caleb: The writings of (Columbus, Ohio, 1833), p. 228. Caleb Atwater writing in 1829 said: "Quincy stands mostly on a high bluff and contains some forty families of very decent looking people, but paleness of countenance told us the same sad tale that the low marshes along the river near them and the vast prairie just east of the town, covered with grasses and weeds ten feet high, might have told them, if properly interrogated. The hill where the town stands is high enough for all the fogs from the marshes along the river to rest on, and they take the liberty to do so. A land office is established here, but the location is a bad one and never can be healthy. To me the people appeared better than any I saw in Illinois as a whole; and my only regret is that such a people should have settled on a spot so insalubrious."

(39) History of Adams County (1879), p. 239. Conclin, George, River Guide or a Gazetteer of all the Towns on the Western Waters. (Cincinnati 1854.) In writing of Quincy the author said: "The country in its vicinity is a beautifully rolling and rich prairie and one of the finest agricultural regions in the State."

(40) Illinois Monthly Magazine (1832), II, 212. The surrounding country is decidedly salubrious and offers many advantages to settlers. Nothing but the fact that a large portion of the land is owned by non-resident proprietors has prevented it from having already attracted a dense population.

(41) See census reports for respective years.

(42) History of Adams County (1879), p. 268.

(43) Illinois Monthly Magazine II., p. 212.

1829 40 families.
1830 200 estimated by Asbury, H., Reminiscences of Quincy, Illinois, p. 44.
1832 700 Illinois Monthly Magazine.
1833 400 History of Adams County, 278; 500 Asbury, p. 44.
1834 750 Ibid.
1841 2,686 Asbury, p. 79.
1845
1848 5,865 Ibid.
1850 6,902 Seventh Census, p. 703.
1854 10,777 Asbury, p. 79.
1860 13,632 Quincy, Board of Commerce, p. 13.
1860 15,718 Eighth Census—population, p. 13.

(44) The Quincy Argus and Illinois Bounty Land Register, April 17, 1835. From July 1st, 1832, there was imported into Quincy produce, principally of flour and bacon, valued at $5,000. From July 1, 1834, to July 1, 1835, with an increase of population there was no importation of the above articles, but on the contrary produce consisting of the above articles was exported to the value of $40,000. From August 1, 1834, to April 1st, 1855, there were 24,900 bushels of wheat purchased and ground, producing about 4,980 barrels of flour. History of Adams County, p. 277. Up to 1834 most of the bacon and flour used by the people of this section had been imported.

(45) Illinois Monthly Magazine II, p. 212, 1832. There were ten stores and two taverns in Quincy in 1832. Steamboats were then running regularly from this port, and the surrounding country was rapidly filling up.

(46) History of Adams County (1879), p. 279. 2,500 bushels of wheat were ground at Quincy in 1835. Asbury, Henry: Reminiscences of Quincy, Illinois (Quincy, Illinois, 1882), p. 64.

(47) Quoting from Quincy Argus and Illinois Bounty Land Register, Nov. 8, 1836: "We do not believe that there is a town in the State of Illinois except perhaps Chicago, which has increased at any time with the rapidity of Quincy for the past summer and fall."

(48) Ibid., p. 498. Chicago, Burlington & Quincy completed in 1856 from Quincy to Galesburg, Quincy and Palmyra completed in 1859.

(49) Hancock County has been affected by other than sound economic principles; hence a detailed examination of its development would be of no value to this study. It was the home of the Mormons, who flocked there about 1838. Within four or five years they numbered more than 16,000. They remained but a few years and were then expelled.

(50) History of Hancock County (1880), p. 231.
(51) Second Reunion Tri-state Association, p. 57. Gordon's address: "There were but 33 votes cast for president in 1832."
(52) History of Hancock County (1880), p. 466.
(53) History of Hancock County (1880), p. 206.
(54) History of Mercer and Henderson Counties (1882), p. 46.
(55) Ibid., p. 887.
(56) McMaster, S. W. Sixty Years on the Upper Mississippi (Rock Island, Ill. 1893), p. 58.
(57) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gazetteer, Sept. 28, 1839. Farnhamsburg, the first town at this place, was superseded by Stephenson in 1839. Rock Island came into existence as a new edition of Stephenson and the name was in 1841 given to the town.
(58) History of Rock Island County (1877), p. 144. From Quincy to Galena, Stephenson was the most noted steamboat landing. Here for many years, travelers from the Sangamon County and Fort Clark reached the river on their way to Galena and the mineral regions North. The beauty and fertility of the Rock River Valley attracted many immigrants from the older states during 1836 and 1837, and a number of flourishing colonies were started in Rock Island, Henry, and Mercer Counties. These colonies were all naturally tributary to Rock Island.
(59) Peoria Register and N.-W. Gazetteer, 9/28/1839. "The inland trade is very considerable and must every year become greater. Many retail purchasers now come from Mercer and Henry Counties, some the distance of 40 miles. * * * The business of Stephenson must be greatly increased from the filling up of the Rock River Country, of which it is the outlet, and the improvement of the navigation of that stream."
(60) Census reports for the respective years:

1840	2,619
1845	5,058
1850	6,937
1860	21,005

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